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ABSTRACT

AT THE OUTSET OF THIS REPORT ON GROUP DAY CARE, TWO QUESTIONS OF PRIMARY CONCERN ARE POSED: HOW DOES A COMMUNITY GET GROUP DAY CARE? AND ONCE IT IS OBTAINED, HOW CAN THE COMMUNITY REGULATE ITS QUALITY? WITH THESE QUESTIONS AS GENERAL GUIDELINES, THE REPORT EXAMINES MOST ASPECTS OF EVERY POSSIBLE KIND OF GROUP DAY CARE PROJECT RANGING FROM LOCAL CHURCH PROJECTS TO FEDERALLY FUNDED PROGRAMS. SPECIFIC EXAMPLES ARE TREATED ANECDOTALLY TO HELP THE READER UNDERSTAND THE SPECIFIC PROBLEMS OF ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING QUALITY DAY CARE. ANOTHER SECTION PLACES DAY CARE IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE. THE MAIN FACETS EXAMINED ARE THE PHYSICAL SITE, POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS, REGULATORY BODIES, ABILITY TO COMMAND STAFF RESOURCES, ADMINISTRATIVE CONSTRAINTS, AND LEADERSHIP ABILITIES. A DIRECTOR'S LEADERSHIP ABILITIES DEPEND ON FIVE FACTORS: (1) PROFESSIONAL SKILL, (2) BUSINESS COMPETENCE, (3) POLITICAL KNOWHOW, (4) CREATIVE INGENUITY, AND (5) COMMITMENT. IN AN EVALUATION OF EXISTING DAY CARE FACILITIES IN CALIFORNIA, THE REPORT STATES THAT THE STRONGEST POINT IS THE DIVERSITY OF AVAILABLE PROGRAMS. A BIBLIOGRAPHY IS INCLUDED. (MH)

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Final Report

AN INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS OF DAY CARE PROGRAM

Part I
Group Day Care: A Study in Diversity

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July, 1969 PACIFIC OAKS COLLEGE
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Although we cannot begin to name all of the people who contributed, we would like especially to thank Josephine Burgess for sharing her collection of newspaper clippings, Ellen Marshall, of the State Department of Social Welfare, for her invaluable assistance, and Norris Class, whose contributions to the total conception of the project will be highlighted in Part II, and finally, our gratitude goes to Ede Haselhoef who did the thousands of things which bring a manuscript to completion.

A study such as this always presents problems in regard to confidentiality and interpretation of events. We have given these much thought and hope that our solutions will be judged adequate. We take full responsibility for any inaccuracies or misinterpretations which may have occurred.

CHAPTER I

PROBLEM

Introduction

This study is concerned with two questions: How does a community get group day care? And once day care is obtained, how can the community regulate its quality? The provision of group day care for young children has a long history dating back to the Civil War. Although such care has become a recognized solution in urban America for the needs of families in which mothers of young children must work, the number of day care facilities has remained small, and their development has been sporadic and marked by an absence of widespread community support.

Recently national policy has been increasingly concerned with the education and welfare of young children. Accompanying this concern is belated recognition of the gross inadequacy of existing community facilities to meet the demand for day care, and a growing inquiry into the quality of the care which is now offered.

Goals for ideal day care services have not been lacking. Typically they include most of the following:

1. All mothers who have the need or desire to work should be able to place their children in high quality day care of their choice.

2. The day care center should work closely with the parent and the home in planning for the needs of each child as an individual.

3. The physical facility should be conveniently located and designed to provide a rich and safe learning environment.

4. The director and teachers should be professionally trained and adequately paid.

5. The program in a center should be designed to provide individualized care.

6. Day care should be licensed by regulatory agencies which can provide careful and skilled supervision over each facility.

Most of these goals are not new and have been advocated for many years in a variety of statements appearing primarily in social work literature (Child Welfare League, 1957; Anon., 1962; Merriam, 1965). What is new is increasing acceptance of the educational value of a group experience for young children and a willingness at the Federal level to implement the establishment of quality day care, both with public monies and in the private sector. This increasing acceptance of day care as a social institution which might strengthen rather than undermine family life inevitably will raise questions about feasible means to provide more day care incorporating the goals outlined.

Unfortunately, there is little information documenting the diversity of ways in which these goals have been or might be sought, or the relative importance of particular goals in achieving quality of care, nor are there established criteria for evaluating success in attaining them. A study of the consequences of group care on children who had been placed in a variety of children's institutions in Europe and Israel (Wolins, 1969) represents one notable exception to this statement. The literature on day care has been concerned primarily with day care as it ought to be or as it has been assumed to exist. Traditionally, this has meant sponsorship by an organized charitable organization, governed by a lay board, which offers day care and related case work services at reduced rates to problem families. Only very limited data have described it as it is now functioning in the community.

Actually, the bulk of day care in this country is not offered under charitable auspices for reduced fees (Low, 1960). The recent study by the Child Welfare League of America has challenged the assumption that day care services should be designed primarily for problem families. Interviews with parents using day care indicated that many mothers were employed for reasons other than incidence of family problems (Ruderman, 1964). Furthermore, we know that even in well-established California day care centers, the social work component as described in the Child Welfare League Standards is virtually non-existent.

The study described here is the third in a series conducted by the authors for the purpose of learning what group day care in a large community is really like, what experiences are provided for parents and children, and what factors appear to be critical in predicting particular types of experience.

Our initial study (Prescott, 1964), designed primarily to compare child-rearing practices of parents and day care personnel, indicated to us that day care, as a community institution, has many facets which can only be understood by a careful examination of its current status. A major finding of the study, in which users of group care and staff in the centers they used were interviewed, was that the relationship between the parent and center seldom developed into a close working relationship, except in centers serving parents of high socio-economic status. At this level parents most often exercised choice in selecting a center because of similarity in child-rearing goals shared by home and school. For these parents communication with the school was often open and effective. The lower the socio-economic level of the parent, characteristically, the greater the discrepancy between home and center in child-rearing practices and goals. This discrepancy in verbal description of practices was accompanied by limited communication between the parent and the school. Parents typically expressed the judgment, unsupported by knowledge of program or acquaintance with teachers, that the care given their children was "good". Many directors and teachers expressed reservations about the ability of either the center or the parent to provide a genuinely valuable child-rearing environment under the circumstances.

In the same study we also proposed that group day care cannot easily provide children with opportunities for privacy, testing of limits, dealing with strong emotions, and talking with observing adults in a variety of roles -- all experiences which seem important in establishing self-identity during this developmental period.

In the second study we examined the hypothesis that there are marked differences among centers in experiences provided to children, as indicated by the nature of the interaction among adults and children and by the selection of materials and activities. We found that there were indeed marked differences. We also confirmed our previous impression that group day care tends to have the inherent limitations described above. We concluded that those centers which provided the richest learning environment for young children were characterized by a high level of encouragement by teachers of self-initiated activities of children (i.e., responsiveness to cues provided by the individual child); by a minimum of restrictiveness and of attention to routine activities such as lining up and toileting, and by high numbers of "lessons taught," especially those concerned with consideration for rights and feelings (self-esteem), knowledge and awareness of the world, and pleasure and delight.1/ These behaviors by teachers were associated with the amount of special training completed by the teacher, and they were characterized by centers whose director valued warmth and non- arbitrary authority. In addition, physical setting factors were found to be important. Centers which were judged to be of high quality, as indicated by teacher behavior described above, had high quality of physical space, 2/ and were of medium size (30 - 60 children).

The study also demonstrated that quality of care (by this definition) was not confined to any one type of sponsorship. However, certain types of excellence appeared to be associated with the unique strengths which go with certain administrative freedoms, while types of inferior programs also appeared to be bound by the special constraints which inadvertently are imposed by circumstances underlying sponsorship. Furthermore, it became apparent that program

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[1] For a descriptive summary of the categories and lessons taught used in this study see Appendix I.

[2] Quality of physical space was evaluated in terms of contents and organization. The evaluation scheme is described in Sybil Kritchevsky and Elizabeth Prescott, Planning Environments for Young Children: Physical Space, National Association for the Education of Young Children, monograph, 1969.

within the center often was determined by events or decisions occurring outside the center. For example, any administrative decisions made with regard to such factors as size of center, physical plant, or staff qualifications limit the subsequent choices which can be made in implementing program goals.

Since these pressures ultimately will be reflected in the type of care offered to children, we felt that an examination of the decision-making process in day care was essential to an understanding of useful goals for quality of care. The decision-making process, in turn, rests upon the reality of environmental necessities to which day care centers, as organizations, must adapt.

These kinds of data have not been plentiful in the field of child welfare. The urgency of needs in this field, coupled with a perennial shortage of money and qualified staff, have encouraged an idealism -- grim reality strategy of momentary pauses to outline goals of excellence alternating with frantic efforts to meet needs of children who cannot wait for more adequate services. The possibilities for constructive change probably lie in the patient untangling of environmental necessities and possibilities, so that more strategies might be mapped which have some realistic hope of implementation.

In this study we shall try to analyze one child welfare service, group day care, in one community at one point in time to see if some documentation of its mode of operation might suggest useful strategies of intervention.

An Organizational Analysis of Day Care

Day care as a social activity can be examined at two levels. At one level it consists of the wide variety of facilities which offer day care. Each of these facilities can be conceived of and examined as an organization concerned with its own purpose and survival. These facilities, in our experience, are marked by great diversity. However, they do tend to group themselves according to sponsorship, because this factor is crucial in determining certain relationships to the external environment.

At another level, day care can be conceived and examined as an emerging social institution -- that is, "an enduring aspect of collective life controlled by rules, customs, rituals, or laws", (English and English, 1958). For example, the public elementary school is an established institution, while public kindergartens are less well established but generally accepted as desirable. Day care, on the other hand, is only now emerging as an aspect of our collective life. A social institution needs social consensus. Consensus can be expressed by attitudes of recognition, laws or regulations (such as compulsory attendance in public schools) and willingness to allocate resources to the institution's support.

This report is concerned with day care on both an organizational and an institutional level, because any understanding of day care as an institution appears to us to be inextricably related to an understanding of the diversity in individual facilities which now exists and the origins of this diversity.

Th investigative approaches which seemed most applicable to the problem proposed are sociological analyses of organizations and institutionalization. Examples of these are Selznick on the TVA (Selznick, 1953) and on leadership in administration (Selznick, 1957), Clark on adult education (Clark, 1958) and the public junior college (Clark, 1960), Blau on public welfare agencies (Blau and Scott, 1962), Seeley on the Community Chest (Seeley et al., 1957), and Sills on the March of Dimes (Sills, 1957). In each of these studies the investigator aims to describe the circumstances under which a pattern of organized social activity has taken form and continues to function. The focus is on the dynamics of organizational life. These dynamics have taken shape around certain basic functions common to all organizations: ". . . (1) achieve the organizations' goals, (2) maintain their internal system and (3) integrate themselves with their environment" (Argyris, 1969). Each of these functions or activities can be examined by looking at certain aspects or dimensions of organizational life.

Goals for an organization will be determined by the attitudes, values, and continuing concerns of its leaders. These goals usually are related to the purpose for which the organization was founded and are either confirmed or altered by subsequent decisions. When decisions over time consistently confirm basic goals, an organization has achieved institutional integrity. Each decision which is made subsequently limits those which can be made. Therefore, over time, an organization becomes more stable but less flexible in its conception of goals and modes for attaining them. (Selznick, 1957).

The internal system, of course, is not independent of goals. Among factors affecting it are administrative structure, the size and physical characteristics of a facility, and the origins and personal characteristics of its staff.

Features of the external environment of an organization such as the clientele which it serves, its relationship to regulatory bodies, and a variety of social and economic conditions will alter goals and demand adaptations within the internal system.

Group day care is offered by a variety of organizations which differ in their goals, even though they provide similar services. The internal structure differs markedly among these organizations. The external environments to which the organizations must adapt vary with economic factors relating to sponsorship, date of establishment, and effectiveness in getting social consensus to promote organizational needs.

In addition to those organizations which offer direct services to clients in the form of day care, there are two other types of organizations concerned

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with day care for which the principles cited above also operate. One type is composed of the policy-making and regulatory agencies which seek to control quality of care. Such agencies are dependent upon the public for sanction of their operation. The second type includes the variety of professional and business organizations formed by day care personnel for the purpose of exerting their demands and seeking broader support. Because of the dependence of these organizations in one way or another on social consensus, their activities are important in assessing day care as an emerging social institution.

Plan of the Report

This report is divided into two parts. The purpose of the first part is to describe, through the use of representative case histories, the types of day care centers which now operate. In doing this we shall present differences in a series of characteristics which determine purposes, internal systems, and environmental circumstances. This presentation should set the stage for the second part, in which we shall attempt to examine the dynamics of the total system, especially in terms of its leadership network.

The data to be presented have been collected in a variety of ways: interviews, questionnaires, content analysis of minutes, and public hearings, structured and participant observation. Some data from previous studies have been used. Throughout, our focus has been on the decision-making process at many levels. In each case we have asked:

(1). What was the background of the problems, conditions or conflicts?

(2). Who were the persons or groups concerned?

(3). What influences determined the outcome?

The centers which will be presented in the case histories were selected according to three criteria.

(1). Our staff had observed at some time during our previous study and have interviewed the director and teachers.

(2). According to evaluations by our staff the center demonstrated a distinctive competence in meeting certain needs for care within the community.

(3). The center, in addition to effectiveness, also represented a type of care which is characteristic in the community.

We selected effective centers because our major concern is for the conditions which promote competence -- also, in our experience, directors of such centers are much more open and willing to share information and more aware of the goals which they desire and the adaptations which are possible.

Part I is organized within an historical context partly because any explanation of the appearance of day care centers in the community must be tied to its economic and social history, and partly because a center continues to bear the marks of its origins. As will become apparent, each type of center is vulnerable to certain pressures which can undermine its possibilities for distinctive competence and all centers regardless of type share certain common problems.

CHAPTER II

HOW DOES A COMMUNITY GET DAY CARE?

The establishment of day care centers in a community appears to be closely linked to community attitudes concerning acceptable roles for married women. The prevailing attitude toward maternal employment in this country traditionally has been that the good mother is one who stays at home. Provision of group care for children, therefore, implies that mothers are working, and arguments for expansion always imply that more mothers could then work. Because of this reluctance by the community officially to facilitate maternal employment, its attitudes toward group care have been ambivalent.

On the one hand, acceptance of community responsibility for the welfare of children is reflected in the long history of centers established to care for children from needy families. Provision for day care centers is regarded as a matter of public interest because it insures the supervision of young children who might otherwise be neglected. Health and nutrition, safety, and the learning of appropriate social behavior can be fostered in the center. Such provision has been justified on the grounds that it helps to prevent later delinquency, as well as to foster the healthy development of young children, and thus offers a wise long-range investment. On the other hand, establishment of day care facilities permits an independence for women which might eventually change their role vis-a-vis men.

Society's Values and Working Wives

The titles of magazine articles listed in Reader's Guide over the years under the heading of Married Women -- Employment are revealing of the social climate surrounding employment of women. From the end of World War I (which produced unprecendented employment of women) until 1924 virtually no articles on this subject are listed. A flurry of articles appeared in the latter half of the decade, with titles suggesting the undermining of masculine authority such as "Have I Stolen My Husband's Birthright?" 1/ During the 30's a persistent concern of magazine articles was that employment of married women was wrong because it reduced the number of jobs available to men. Just before the outbreak of World War II a spate of articles appeared, presenting maternal employment more objectively as a possible choice for some women. Many articles during this period were variations of this straightforward title, "Should Wives Work?" 2 / Throughout the war years, entries were concerned with policies for

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[1] Reader's Guide, p.1537, 1925 - 1928.

[2] Op. cit., p.1255, July, 1939 - June, 1941.

maternity leave and child care, and questions concerning women's right to work had vanished. Indicative of the pendulum swing was the title of one article, "America's Pampered Husbands". 3/

Immediately following the war there was again a period of quiescence resembling that of the period after World War I. This lull was followed by a sharp increase during the 50's in discussions of advantages and disadvantages of employment of married women. The titles indicated that many women liked working, and that part-time employment was a sought-after solution. By the end of the decade, very practical consequences of maternal employment were the principle concern. Ideas about managing the home and child care appeared with increasing frequency.

Definition of the rights of the individual in a democracy has, in the course of our history, been extended to include the ideal, if not the reality, of non-discrimination by sex in the occupational sphere. Moral concern for individual rights, as well as periodic labor-force need for womanpower, has led our society to a position (still somewhat ambivalent) that a woman who can contribute to her family's income, to her personal satisfaction, and/or the community good through exercise of her particular talents in work should have the opportunity to do so. Emphasis by society is still on the "opportunity". The norm remains that women who have economic support and who prefer to maintain full responsibility for child-rearing should have the right not to work.

Day Care and Employment

Establishment of day care centers has always hinged on the state of the employment market. Centers have served needy women who were attempting to support their families, patriotic women working in defense industries, or more recently, women who find satisfaction in working. However, the centers themselves have also been established and justified as sources of employment, as in the depression. To some extent current Federal interest in day care stems from the possibility of establishing day care centers as private business enterprises in the ghetto and the possibility of employing some women as paraprofessionals in centers where other mothers in job training can leave their children.

Establishment of centers has also hinged on a more hidden variable -- the absence of other alternatives for care. The preferred and most common day care resource in the United States is the use of relatives.4/ This resource

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[3] Op. cit., p.1020, July, 1943 -June, 1945.

[4] Herzog, 1964, cited figures indicating that 57% of day care was provided by relatives.

is somewhat limited in Southern California, which has been populated by waves of immigrants many of whom have left family ties behind. The absence both of family resources and established traditions undoubtedly underlies the fact that Southern California has more group day care facilities than any other urban area in this country. At present there are 556 day care centers in Los Angeles County.

An Historical Perspective

The Variety of Centers

The establishment of day care centers in Southern California can be divided into five eras. Each of these eras contributed a distinctive type of center whose goals were set by the needs of the time and given form according to the philosophy and resources of its founders.

The Charitable Day Nursery

In 1918 the California Department of Charities and Corrections reported to the legislature that there were 18 day nurseries in the state which were receiving and caring for children. Of the 18 nurseries listed, 10 were in Southern California; half of these are still in existence. All of the facilities were non-profit and under private auspices. They served the children of families with inadequate income due to illness, unemployability of the father or no father in the home. In all cases the mothers were working, the families were poor and the children were cared for either free of charge or with small payments according to the ability of the mother to pay. With the development of local Community Chests the majority of these nurseries applied to and drew their support from those organizations. From 1918 until the beginning of World War II these large facilities were the only ones in existence under the jurisdiction of the licensing department.

These nurseries were established by ladies of charity for a needy population. Whatever professional allegiance they might have was to the field of social work. The concept of nursery education had not yet emerged; consequently, these nurseries passed through their formative years during a period when quality in child care was measured primarily by standards of cleanliness, rest, and nutrition.

Public Child Care Center: The Depression and War Years

In 1933 the Works Progress Administration established emergency nurseries "for the care of children of needy, unemployed families or neglected or underprivileged homes where preschool age children will benefit from the program offered" (Brown, 1940). In Los Angeles these nurseries were housed, for the most part, in public schools. There were several reasons, most of them highly practical. Schools had empty classrooms which could be used, and the administrative machinery to handle bookkeeping and purchasing. In addition occasional day care in schools had previously existed in response to local necessity. 5/

The personnel of the nurseries, including teachers, nurses, cooks, and assistants, were to consist of unemployed persons eligible for relief. Since a major purpose of this program was to provide employment, child care, in many respects, was a by-product of the program.

An important feature of the WPA program was the provision of special training for emergency nursery school teachers who were partially qualified. This training was carried on in available teacher education institutions and colleges, and trainees were paid while learning. The WPA Emergency Nursery Schools provided work for hundreds of unemployed school teachers and other professional individuals. Because of provisions for employment of professional persons and provisions for training in nursery practices, many of these schools became exciting centers of excellence. As one of our informants recalled:

> The Nursery School was a community center. Everyone was dirt-poor, and we really needed each other. Our morale was high. Fathers helped build equipment; we had pot-lucks; we set up our own credit union.
>
> The ones who loved the work stayed in it; those who needed money went into public school teaching. They were inspired by the leaders they had worked under, and many moved into positions of professional leadership themselves.

In 1941 when the United States declared war with Japan attitudes toward maternal employment changed almost overnight. It became the patriotic duty of every employable woman to take part in defense activities, especially as workers in the defense industries. Women from all economic levels poured into factories for jobs.

The existing charitable nurseries continued in operation to care for children of working mothers with low income, and the WPA nurseries continued, though with uncertain funding. A change in policy made it possible for the WPA nurseries to employ staff who were not on public assistance. However, these two types of nurseries did not begin to cover even emergency needs.

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[5] For example, during the 1920's a school principal learned that children were not attending school because they were baby-sitting with younger siblings while their mothers (primarily Russian immigrants) worked in a walnut factory. She responded by setting up a day care facility in an empty classroom. Other schools followed suit, finding necessary resources in a variety of ways.

Reports were common that children were being left alone at home, locked in cars, or were being left with relatives or neighbors who might or might not give them good care. In practically every community in the state there was no place to send these children. They became known as "latch-key" children because they carried the keys to their homes on strings around their necks.

In August, 1942 the War Manpower Commission directed the Office of Defense, Health and Welfare Services to develop a coordinated program of Federal assistance for the care of children of working mothers. Under this program each state submitted plans. In California, because of the tradition of housing day nurseries in the public schools, the programs were established under the public school system. The WPA nurseries still in existence were transferred to the Child Care program. Consequently, many of the policies and practices developed when teachers with training in nursery education worked in WPA nurseries, were carried over into the child care program. These centers had little contact during their formative years with social work as a professional discipline. Their orientation, both because of their location on school grounds and early contact with the nursery school movement, was toward education rather than social work. California was the only state to retain public centers after the war, moving from Federal to state funding, and many still in existence date back to WPA days.

The Rise of Proprietary Centers

Prior to the war private commercial (proprietary) nursery schools and day care centers were few in number. Attendance at nursery school had not yet become a middle class pattern, and day care was still conceived as a service for the poor. But during the war the need for care became so urgent that makeshift day care of all types mushroomed at a rate which made adequate licensing supervision almost impossible. Private centers did not disappear after the war as overworked licensing staff had hopefully predicted; instead they increased in number. The decade of the 50's was the heyday for their expansion. The population in Los Angeles was increasing spectacularly, and the burgeoning electronics industry (as well as many others) was employing large numbers of women. Economic conditions and licensing regulations made it possible to establish a day care center as a private business with a small cash outlay and no special training. These centers were characteristically small, with fewer than 60 children, and like any small business, they tried to please the customer.

Day care entrepreneurs varied greatly in education and ambitions. Many had training in elementary education and clearly envisioned their facility as a private school. Others, often without formal training but with experience in child-rearing and a liking for children, adopted a trial and error approach using the large family as their basic model. All of them possessed, in common, a certain confidence in their ability to cope with the uncertainties of a small business, and pleasure in being their own boss.

The Discovery of Early Childhood

The advent of Head Start marked the beginning of another era in day care. Although the number of private centers has continued to increase, the kinds of people who can secure licenses are changing. The amount of capital now needed to establish a center and increasing difficulties with city zoning eliminate most of the people who have the modest goal of opening a small center in the neighborhood. More and more applications for licensing are being received from corporations or from individuals who have financial backing or are expanding current facilities. Inquiries are increasing from persons hoping to start franchise day care centers, a form of financing already realized by Montessori schools. There is speculation that day care may soon offer the kind of business opportunity which was offered by the convalescent hospital when Federal funding became available thru Medicare.

Summary

The scattered day care facilities provided early in this century by charitable day nurseries have multiplied many times over during the last thirty-five years in California. Depression and war saw the beginning and expansion of public day care facilities; war and postwar growth stimulated the development of day nurseries as small business enterprises. Concern for ghetto problems in the present decade offers promise of a new era of expansion.

Each type of facility, begun under different historical circumstances, still flourishes in Southern California. In the chapters which follow, we will present a case study of each of the several types of group day care center, delineating the different goals, internal structure and external adaptation which characterizes each.

CHAPTER III

DAY CARE AS A SOCIAL SERVICE FUNCTION: THE CASE OF FOOTHILL DAY NURSERY 1/

The charitable day nursery has been a symbol of institutionalized day care since the turn of the century. Its establishment was the response of concerned and, typically, affluent citizens -- sometimes in small groups but often as individuals -- to the needs of indigent families, particularly those in which the mother was forced to work. As these facilities grew in size and importance they began to depend upon the private philanthropic sector of the community; membership on the lay board of such institutions fulfilled the dual function of insuring social status for upper class matrons as well as vitally needed services for destitute mothers and children.

Oriented from their beginnings towards providing family welfare and custodial day care services, the old-time charitable day nurseries have achieved a stability which other types of facilities sometimes envy, but rarely duplicate. At the same time, the administrative structure which makes possible such stability and permanence often tends to become rigid and inflexible and thus less able to adapt to changing needs. The presence of economic and social dominants on the board of directors has removed much of the financial pressure felt in public and entrepreneurial programs and assured a high quality of physical care. However, conservative attitudes of these board members have often prevented the adoption of innovative responses to changing needs in child care.

Because population growth in California came after the era which saw establishment of charitable nurseries, this type of nursery is relatively insignificant in Southern California. Of the 556 day care facilities in Los Angeles County, only 19 are charitable nurseries, and of these several are conspicuous examples of unchanging isolation from the larger day care scene. Others, of which we have selected Foothill Day Nursery for detailed study, play an important role in their communities and have displayed an ability to maintain effective leadership through responsiveness to changing conditions.

From its beginnings in the early 1900's until World War II, Foothill Day Nursery fulfilled a need for the promotion of social welfare on a private

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[1] To preserve the anonymity of informants the identifying features of these case histories have been changed. Also, certain facts have been rearranged or combined to make the cases most useful as illustrations of types of programs.

basis, when the upper classes assumed it was their right and duty to provide for less fortunate members of society. Because Foothill City was a community with a high percentage of affluent, well-educated citizens whose civic pride as well as human compassion moved them to action, the day nursery lacked neither monetary nor human resources.

Founded by one of those pioneering, dynamic and aggressive ladies with which Foothill City seemed to abound, who possessed a charismatic spirit which refused to admit the existence of the word "can't", the day nursery first ministered to the physical and emotional needs of approximately one dozen children from the lowest income families of the community. Led by the founder, who gathered "egg money" up in her apron to finance the operation, a nucleus of devoted volunteers often took the children on expeditions into the countryside. The early teachers were women who loved children and learned to care for them under the tutelage of an eminent female nursery educator whom the founder had brought from an eastern training school. Relationships were warm and founded on basic trust. There was no such thing as a retirement program; the teachers simply "knew that the nursery would take care of them". Funding for the nursery was based, in the early days, primarily on individual donations of the women volunteers. Later the day nursery joined the Community Chest and now receives approximately two-thirds of its yearly budget from this source.

Services Offered

At one time the nursery provided care for infants. Today it serves children from two to five and offers extended day care for children of elementary school age. It is open ten and one-half hours a day (many public and proprietary centers offer twelve hours of service). Teacher-child ratios vary somewhat with age of children but range between 1 to 10 and 1 to 12.

Because the purpose of the nursery is to provide a family welfare service to the low income population of Foothill City, the social work function is an important part of the operation. The nursery employs a social case worker whose role is that of family counselor. She conducts the intake interview which serves to determine eligibility and to discuss the child in relation to his family and the nursery. A means test is applied to applicants and is rigidly enforced, partly to control enrollment and partly to allay the suspicions of private day care facilities that the nursery is competing for clients. Families are given preference according to a four-level priority scale:

1). One-parent families

2). Two-parent families, accepted when 'one parent is unable to assume responsibility, due either to mental, physical, or economic factors'.

3). Families where the father is in military service and mothers must work to supplement the allotment

4). Two-parent families with a special reason

Ninety percent of the families are one-parent and extremely low in social and economic stability. The need of the parents for support and guidance is met through a continuing relationship with the social worker, who frequently gives referrals to other community agencies. Minor problems involving the children are the province of the nursery director, who often talks with parents informally when they bring and pick up the children. Her relationship with the parents is on a warm and friendly though professional basis. There is no attempt to involve parents as a group in the program, but the concern of the nursery for the welfare of the child and his family is conveyed through individual parent-staff interaction.

The strong child-oriented philosophy of Foothill Day Nursery is reflected in its stated policies:

> "A preschool child is never thrust into an unknown situation; so for three days the children just visit at the nursery, with their mothers and then alone until they feel at home there. The children are provided a happy, healthful and understanding environment in which to live and grow during the hours that their own parents, for one reason or another, are unable to care for them. Understanding of children's needs has greatly increased in the past decade. We know that the care a child receives determines what kind of an adult he will be. The nursery staff tries to give each child the support and security he needs at all times in order to grow to be a well-adjusted child."

The organizational structure of the nursery is designed to provide for an efficient division of labor and close co-operation between job functions and levels. It aims for a well-coordinated system which can offer children and families a more complete range of services than many types of day care. The director, teachers, and social worker discuss children's needs in both individual and group conferences. A child with severe problems detected by the teaching staff can be referred to the case worker for study, and, if required, to outside specialists. Referrals to other agencies are facilitated by the agency's ties in the community.

Physical Facilities

Foothill Day Nursery shares a common problem with all other long-established centers -- its facilities are old. It has not yet, as others have, faced the problem of rebuilding. The building was constructed forty years ago, and until the new director developed plans for remodeling, it was inconvenient; the plumbing (apparently a universal headache for occupants of older day care facilities) created major problems. In spite of, and in some ways because of, its age, it provides a warm, home-like setting which newly-constructed buildings often fail to achieve. The two-story building is an anomaly in contemporary California, where the one-level ranch style is typical in day care facilities as well as homes; it reveals the generation gap, making the structure the product of another era.[2]

The outdoor yards, once awkwardly arranged, were redesigned by Mrs. T., the new professional director; fences were moved, equipment regrouped, and the result yielded spatial usage which was rated as excellent according to our criteria. Of the equipment Mrs. T. observed:

> "When I came I noticed on the one hand a lot of items, apparently donated, which were old and inadequate. I think there is a tendency for voluntary agencies to accept anything anybody gives them. On the other hand there was much new equipment indoors, with barely a scratch on it. This seemed to indicate controlled use (by the children); teachers tended to preserve things, like the doll corner, as a prize, not to be touched".

The Lay Board vs. Professional Expertise: "Lady on a Tiger"?

For most of its long existence Foothill Day Nursery has been governed by a board of lay volunteers who occupy positions of wealth and influence in the community. The board has thus traditionally been socially prestigious, and the nursery has always been considered as the charitable institution with which one should seek affiliation, if one did not derive membership by ascription through kinship. The present board membership, entirely female in composition and numbering twenty-one, is drawn to a large degree from the Junior League, a group of young women organized for participation in civic affairs through volunteer services to social agencies. The League itself is undergoing a transition in image from a wealthy, lady-of-leisure, "do-gooder" stereotype to that of the paraprofessional volunteer. A local league president noted recently:

> "We are re-evaluating our main purpose -- training volunteers for meaningful service. We are no longer the idle rich. Many of us aren't even rich.... Our future is providing more skilled volunteers

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[2] At one time teachers lived on the upper floor; the practice was eliminated when it was found that provision of residence would have to be considered a part of staff salaries and could not be taken as tax deductions. The prospect of having to raise teachers' salaries to provide for residence caused consternation in the board, and the unique feature of a live-in staff came to an end.

working in administrative capacities, serving on boards of charitable institutions or agencies at the policy-making level". [3]

The league is deeply involved in many facets of Foothill City community services, and the Day Nursery is one of its main projects. While the desire for greater 'professionalism' may be a genuine one, particularly with younger members who are better-educated and often seek professional careers rather than a life-time of volunteering, recent events at the nursery revealed a reluctance on the part of the board majority to yield decision-making power to a paid staff member in spite of the high degree of professional training and experience in early childhood education which she brought to the job. A factor more crucial than the traditional conflict of layman vs. professional may be the distribution of power and the desire of a conservative clique within the board to maintain control over the destiny of Foothill Day Nursery.[4]

The gradual relinquishment of board power which has taken place since the 40's as a result of unplanned decision-making may have set in motion a counter-force on the part of certain factions within the board to recapture lost autonomy. The attempt to counteract the effect of institutional drift and surrender of leadership functions to agencies or individuals in the external society may account for the seemingly ambivalent behavior of the board with respect to the virtues of 'professionalism'. Two environmental forces have conspired to create pressures on the traditionally unpressured board -- the first related to funding, the second to the hiring of a professional director who was brought into the organization from the'outside'.

Pressures: Funding

The first in a series of decisions, which the board was later to regret, occurred in the 1940's when the nursery joined the Community Chest. The move was prompted by a sudden concern over potential financial problems. While the charitable day nurseries have been the more wealthy branches in the day care family tree, there are indications that once-generous donors have become reluctant, partly due to the legal complexities involved in giving money. Noted one observer:

> "Women used to bring their money with them (to board meetings) and give it as needed. Later on, they used to write checks for it, but

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[3] Los Angeles Times, February 11, 1968.

[4] Noted a local newspaper recently, "The Junior League today is not likening itself to the 'young lady from Niger, who smiled as she rode on a tiger. They returned from the ride with the lady inside, and the smile on the face of the tiger'. Rather, Leagues have decided they will 'sit atop the tiger' and guide its actions in a fast-changing, many-faceted society -- rather than riding passively inside". Los Angeles Times, February 11, 1968.

now few women are able to give any money at all to the Nursery without consulting lawyers and getting access to special funds".

The Nursery has thus become akin to a flood survivor who finds 'water, water everywhere but not a drop to drink'. The uncustomary difficulties in fund raising, coupled with a dislike for parting with their money unless it is for projects which interest them, has made the board more and more cautious about adding anything to the program which will increase operating expenses.

Pressures: Professionalization

Foothill Day Nursery had not, over the years, had a professionally-trained director. Finally, at the insistence of a progress-oriented faction within the traditionally conservative board, and with nudging from the licensing worker, the board employed a director with unusually high qualifications (including an M.A. in early childhood education and extensive professional experience). This director, Mrs. T., perceived program and personnel practices, which had remained in a comfortable status-quo for half a century, as woefully inadequate by contemporary standards. The tendency towards a laissez-faire approach concerning teacher training and salary scales over the years had led to a deterioration in program quality. The emphasis had remained on custodial care, e.g., hot meals, daily health inspection and adequate rest periods; little attention was given to the educational content of the program. Many of the staff, untrained and under-paid when they first began work at the nursery twenty and twenty-five years previously, continued that way.

In one of her first moves, Mrs. T. managed to acquire board support in a concentrated push for in-service training. She succeeded in getting the University Extension service to offer its "Core" course of nursery school teacher training at the Foothill City YWCA. The Day Nursery board paid full tuition for this course for some teachers, one-half tuition for others. Within two years several teachers had received certificates of completion. Working closely with the personnel committee of the board, Mrs. T. sought to establish a permanent in-service training program which would upgrade teacher qualifications and provide a legitimate foundation for raising the salary scale, thus providing motivation for further staff improvement. Notes Mrs. T: "The board did its homework but it wouldn't, in the final analysis, let go of the money". The teachers who had earned certificates received no salary increase, and the training program lost its impetus.

The results of the concentrated effort by the director to upgrade teacher qualifications were visible in the nursery program when we observed in 1965. Two of the four teachers in our sample were in their twenties, and had been in the position no longer than two years. Recruited by Mrs. T. from public junior and four-year colleges whose reputations for strength in teacher training were well established [5] these teachers indicated through their interviews a substantial background in early childhood education. Their teaching, as we observed it, reflected an attempt to provide the children with more than mere custodial care. They demonstrated a concentrated effort to provide the children with learning experiences designed to expand understanding of themselves and their environment.

The two older teachers, one of whom had taught at the Nursery for 20 years, tended to typify the long-term employees who had little formal training or experience outside of the Nursery, and whose main interest in in-service training was job security. Their goals for children's experiences tended to be less complex than those of the other teachers: "happiness", "welfare", and "safety" (in reference to concerns for the children) were terms frequently used. They provided children with more than the average amount of physical assistance, and less than the average in learning experiences. Their expressed feelings toward the children were warm and nurturant, if somewhat inflexible in practice (an attitude apparently shared by the board toward the teachers themselves, who were receiving $250 a month for a forty-hour week when Mrs. T. came to Foothill Day Nursery).

Pressures: Funding (Again)

Establishment and maintenance of a professionally qualified teaching staff required, as the director saw it, professional-level salaries. Having lost her first round with the board, which approved in-service training but failed to match it with a salary increase, Mrs. T. turned her attention to the possibility of new sources of revenue for the Nursery. This drama was played in three acts:

> 1). The director proposed that the board apply to the County Bureau of Public Assistance for funds available under state legislation for the children being served. This recommendation was made on the basis that the day nursery was charging mothers extremely low fees and therefore was losing money, for which it rightfully and legally could be reimbursed by the county. Initially strongly opposed, the board eventually agreed -- with considerable reluctance -- to approve the application.

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[5] Mrs. T. observed that she preferred teachers whose course work had been in the Home Economics department since that program was most relevant to early childhood education in group day care.

2). The director suggested investigation of the possibility of receiving state compensatory education funds. The individual with whom the nursery would have to deal was well known to board members on a personal, social basis in the community, and he informed them that the project should not be pursued. Insisting that 'it would not be worth the trouble', he painted a grim picture of dire consequences in terms of delayed funds. The effort was subsequently abandoned.

3). The director recommended application to the United States Children's Bureau for a demonstration Head Start Center. Reluctantly and after much board discussion, the chairman secured an application blank. The animosity which this move created toward the chairman caused her to remark later to Mrs. T. that 'this was one of the biggest mistakes I ever made'.

The cycle had come to a halt. The new director had sought to increase program quality by increasing teacher qualifications, to attract and hold qualified teachers by raising salary levels, and to enable payment of higher salaries by broadening the nursery's base of financial support. At each step the director met with some success. For example, in two years teachers' salaries were raised from $250 to $330 per month. But retirement and other benefits remained non-existent, and the board's panic in the face of the proposal for government funding made it clear that further growth in the immediate future was unlikely. Discouraged, Mrs. T. resigned. The board replaced her with a new director who had come up through the ranks within the nursery and was well liked by the staff. Although a capable administrator, she lacks a strong background of education or outside experience, and is non-threatening to the board. Unlike Mrs. T. she is willing to appease all factions, to 'not put all her eggs in one basket', as one staff member pointed out. It is probable that recruitment from the inside, at this stage in institutional evolution (which may or may not be transitional), was the only hope for the nursery if it was to avoid further conflict between the board and the director, between volunteers and professionals.

Who Is to Have the Power ?

Mrs. T. is a professional educator who perceived her responsibility as including the education not only of young children, but also of her day nursery board, to the realities of today's world. In early years the majority of the needy families served by Foothill Day Nursery were disadvantaged only in economic and personal terms; they were poor and often fatherless, but they were also white and, hopefully, upwardly mobile. Their relationships with the nursery staff were relatively uncomplicated, and the staff could function effectively without a high level of training.

In contrast, Foothill City in the 1960's has seen the development of urban ills which afflict many other once prosperous and relatively homogeneous smaller cities. Pockets of severe poverty and a growing percentage of ethnic minorities have created a sizable proportion of disadvantaged families not only in the city's central core but in other previously unafflicted areas. Children from many such families need not only physical and emotional care, but education designed to compensate for subcultural differences and the effects of racial prejudice.

While Mrs. T., as director, saw her major function as helping teachers to improve their abilities and understanding, thus directly improving services to children and parents, she was simultaneously active in interpreting the agency to the community and in seeking to redefine its role. Some of her most valuable achievements, Mrs. T. feels, were in the external community, working with other executive directors of child care agencies:

> "My work in Foothill City through the community welfare council was very fruitful. I worked with the Jewish Community Center, the YWCA and others and learned a great deal about the community. All the programs then in existence, including Foothill Day Nursery, were terribly middle class... We were trying to open them to the poor".

In retrospective evaluation of her experience at Foothill Day Nursery Mrs. T. believes her approach was 'too tough', that the board as a whole could not accept the creative and aggressive leadership role she felt compelled to pursue. Some of the problems she encountered were clearly due to historic patterns of political and economic conservatism; thus, ideological constraints, tend to discourage use of the county, state, and federal aid available as supplementary funding to such nurseries. In addition, they resulted from a reluctance to expand old child care goals to include new concepts and, perhaps even more to the point, an unwillingess on the part of the socially prestigious lay board to yield autonomy to a hired professional expert. As one observer commented:

> "In Foothill City it's a question of philosophy, related to the prestige of the women on the board. It is important to them as well as the community as a whole, to have this program as a demonstration that 'we can take care of our own'. It's become a sop to the local citizens, -- even more custodial now than in its beginnings".

The future role of Foothill Day Nursery is uncertain. Its stable foundations in the community guarantee its permanence, but its reluctance to expand its goals tends to weaken its potential value. It could, as Mrs T. pointed out, make an important contribution towards meeting the needs of disadvantaged groups, but not without more creative strategies. These demand greater flexibility which, in turn, requires new leadership.

One hope lies in the attraction of younger, more professionally oriented (and,possibly,male) members of the board. A further solution may lie in the growing abandonment of the insularity which has been for so many years common to charitable day nurseries. The alliance with other forces and sectors in the community, which the Junior League advocates, is frequently achieved through husband-and-wife teams, like that of the new director and her husband, who is an administrator in the Foothill City public school system. "This", the former director feels, "is an important link with the public schools". 6/

Relationships with professional organizations might also help the nursery stay in the main stream. In 1966 the Foothill Day Nursery did not yet belong to the Child Welfare League; at that time it was considering the least binding of membership contracts with the association, under which it would receive publications and one or two field trips a year to the nursery by a Child Welfare League consultant. Aside from this relationship, virtually no other contacts exist.

Under the present goal priorities, funding is not yet a major problem, although the handwriting is on the wall. With a more realistic program and salary scale, the situation could be altered. Notes one observer:

> "The nursery has funds but they are non-negotiable assets; its securities are in unreachable places. Its position is still very secure. The institution is property-tax free, and the United Way underwrites two-thirds of the expense. Within the board there is plenty of money. But the wealthiest do not have access to money as they did in the early days".

The board, although wary of accepting public funds and controls, may eventually find itself forced to seek the type of solutions Mrs. T. once unsuccessfully proposed.

The Strengths and Weaknesses of the Charitable Day Nursery

In spite of its weaknesses Foothill Day Nursery, like other charitable day nurseries, possesses many distinctive features to recommend it. The concentration on custodial care, while creating programmatic deficiencies, guarantees the provision of a superior quality of physical care, for both the children and their environment.

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[6] The Nursery has a potentially valuable link with the public schools, but it remains a source of tension. The nursery teachers walk children in the Extended Day Care program to school and back, which could provide close relationships between the elementary school and the nursery. These children also eat lunch at the nursery rather than in the school cafeteria. The public school personnel resent "that certain element that won't eat at our school", and the Foothill Day Nursery teachers object to the interruption in their daily schedule.

In addition, it permits a certain flexibility of care. Alteration in program is frequently made to suit the individual child or parent at the nursery. Substitutions in menu, particularly for allergic children, are common. Recently, when a mother was in an automobile accident, the nursery accepted her child temporarily until she recovered sufficiently to care for him. Also, the nursery will take two year olds, a younger age than some public or private centers will accept.

Clientele Served

Charitable day nurseries tend to emphasize the needs which the children and families they serve have for security, stability, and help. In contrast, public Children's Centers, which also have a reduced fee and a priority schedule similar to that of day nurseries, reflect in their structure an assumption of the competence of the parents whom they serve, offering neither casework nor flexibility of services. We have been curious whether or not there actually is a marked difference in characteristics of the clientele which these two types of facilities serve. While data are lacking, it seems probable that families which use charitable nurseries are more dependent, more apt to be known to other social agencies. Those families which place high value on an image of independence may prefer Children's Centers, which are identified as school-related services.

Common Problems of Day Nurseries

Charitable day nurseries share the common problem of old age. Buildings which were optimum facilities situated in ideal neighborhoods in the early decades of the 20th century now are aged by any standards and often find themselves sandwiched between freeways or located in or near the city's skid row district.

Some also are burdened with staff and board members who (due to limited education and outlook) act as a mill stone to the organization because of their inadequacies and rigidity. It is difficult, especially in a charitable organization, to oust those who have loyally given long service. As long as a charitable nursery retains a non-professional, untrained staff any push for new program must come from within the board itself. Many boards are themselves isolated from current developments and oriented toward the conservative outlook often held by those of their social position. Consequently, the sources of information which enter the board are very non-specific and limited.

Adequate financial support is becoming a much more serious problem with all charitable day nurseries than in the past. Obviously, a custodial program run by non-professional staff and with a relatively high ratio of children to teachers is the most economical program to finance. Boards are quick to understand that a one-time money raising effort for remodeling the kitchen or even for replacing an outdated building is easier to manage than the permanent and irrevocable increase in annual budget which results from paying salaries to obtain first-rate staff. In Los Angeles the Community Chest places low priority on its handful of day nurseries and has taken no steps to increase the scale for nursery teachers, though it has done so for social group workers and other categories of personnel common to its more influential agencies.

Given these pressures, some charitable day nurseries in Los Angeles have adapted by employing professional staff, redefining their purpose and seeking new sources of funding. For example, one nursery now limits its service to children with behavior problems; another has relocated its center as part of an apartment complex which has been purchased by a social agency. Those who have chosen to retain their program of custodial care remain isolated from the leadership network which has consistently and devotedly sought to increase understanding of the needs of young children.

CHAPTER IV

CALIFORNIA CHILDREN'S CENTERS: 'TEMPORARY' PERMANENCE IN DAY CARE

> ". . . The thing is, you have to have a long career for such devotion. You have to become a part of people's lives" .
> Actress Ruth Gordon, Los Angeles Times, April 27, 1969.

An important source of strength and stability in group day care in California is the statewide system of public Children's Centers. Funded by the State Department of Education and parent fees in an approximately two-to-one ratio , they have been administered by local school districts since 1945 1/. The Children's Centers recently marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of their founding with a conference attended by four hundred administrators and teaching personnel, parents, and professional people specializing in early childhood education who have been deeply committed to the work of the centers over the years -- those various persons who, in the words of the president of the state-wide Parents' Association, "care about the Children's Centers".

The effective leadership of "people who cared" has been concretely demonstrated since the mid-1940's. At that time California was unique among the states in retaining its statewide public child care program after federal funding was withdrawn in 1945. In 1946 the state legislature undertook continuation of the existing program, making funds available on a year-to-year basis. It was not until 1957, however, that the permanency of the program was guaranteed by removal of the terminal date from the sections of the California Education Code pertaining to Child Care Centers 2/.

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[1] Public child care centers were first established in California in 1943 with federal funds provided by the Lanham Act in response to the wartime emergency, which created an immediate need for women workers in defense industries.

[2] Ronald W. Cox, "The Child Care Center Program from the Point of View of the Department of Education", presentation at meeting of Northern Section, California Child Care Directors and Supervisors Association, Hotel Claremont, Berkeley, Calif., January 8, 1960. (Provision in Education Code, Stats. 1957, Ch. 182).

The following guidelines characterize Children's Centers:

1). Operate under the auspices of the local Board of Education which determines policy, including program, staffing, salaries, teacher-child ratios, admissions, location of centers, etc.

2). Restrict enrollment to children of families (usually one-parent) which can pass the means test [3] If any places remain after this screening process, children of certain professional workers (e.g., teachers, nurses) may be admitted.

3). Receive funds from the State Department of Education in a two-to-one ratio of state support to parents' fees. Fees are based on a sliding scale related to income.

4). Are usually housed in buildings constructed according to a master plan for public Children's Centers, located on school district-owned property. Many Children's Centers are adjacent to but administratively separate from a public elementary school.

5). Include nursery centers for children from two to kindergarten age, extended day centers for children through elementary school years. and combination centers in which both groups are in attendance.

Standards for California Children's Centers' teachers are set by statutory regulations in the State Education Code, subject to amendment by the legislature. Directors of Children's Centers in local school districts occupy a position in the administrative hierarchy of the district comparable to that of elementary principal; their duties and salaries vary from district to district, as does their autonomy. The degree of autonomy appears to depend to a considerable extent on the interest the superintendent exhibits toward day care program and his willingness to delegate decision-making authority to the centers' director.

The Foothill City Children's Centers Program: A War Baby

Prior to World War II, child care needs of working mothers in Foothill City were met by Foothill Day Nursery, the charitable agency discussed in the preceding chapter. But the war brought with it an urgent public demand for the care of young children whose fathers had gone to war and whose mothers had become, like the legendary 'Rosie the Riveter', workers in war industries.

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[3] In nearly twenty years the level of monthly income used as a means test had more than doubled; in 1949, it was $225 per month, in 1968, $463. (John Weber, Supervisor, California Children's Centers, in a speech delivered before the Children's Centers Parents Association, November 16, 1968, Los Angeles, California). Eighty percent of the children who attended Children's Centers in California in 1960 were from one-parent families.

By December 1942, twenty thousand local women were already employed in war plants and in ship yards. What to do with the children of working mothers became a critical issue. A child care committee set up as a part of the Los Angeles Defense Council in December of 1942 proposed a legislative program endorsed by nearly two dozen participating organizations 4 /.

The program requested legislation to enable the state of California to administer state funds and federal monies provided under the Lanham Act for the education and emergency care of preschool children and children of school age before and after school hours 5/. Noting the likelihood of the opening of "large numbers of nursery schools, both public and private, for working mothers in the state", the CIO voiced the opinion that "it is essential that authority be vested in the State Department of Education and in the district public schools to set standards and supervise nursery schools" 6/.

The attitudes toward public child care in California which arose in the 40's had a lasting effect on public acceptance of such programs. These attitudes were not without ambivalence. On the one hand, it was considered patriotic for women to work in war industries. On the other hand, the danger of 'the state', in the form of the Defense Council and ultimately the public schools, becoming guardian of the nation's children was a very real spectre to some legislators. Stated one Los Angeles County Supervisor: "If the state takes over raising the family it's the first step toward Communism". Another supervisor, equating community care of children of working mothers

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[4] Among these organizations were the state Parent Teachers Association, American Association of University Women, League of Women Voters, National Association of Manufacturers, State Chamber of Commerce, Businessmen's Association, the American Legion, Council on Mental Hygiene, California Taxpayer's Association, CIO and AFL, and numerous farm and service groups.

[5] Recommendations submitted by the Child Care Committee of the Los Angeles City Defense Council, (mimeo.) December, 1942.

[6] Archives of Foothill City School district: mimeographed proposal, "Legislation Needed for Emergency Program for Care of Children in Wartime", submitted to Child Care Committee, Los Angeles City Defense Council, December, 1942.

with government control of children, became so apoplectic -- in the terminology of the newspaper reporting the proceedings of the board meeting -- that the matter was referred to committee. The Defense Council noted in rebuttal that:

> "There are ninety-one thousand children in this county whose mothers are working, many of them in defense industries. A large proportion of these children range in age from tiny babies up to kindergarten youngsters, let alone the additional thousands of young 'door-key' children who attend school with a key strung around their necks . . .
>
> Of course we do not endorse child care homes or day nurseries as a substitute for mothers' care. It is true the mothers of small children should be at home looking after them. But there is a war going on, and the mothers of these little tykes are working -- so the problem is there for us to deal with" 7/.

Because the problem was thrust upon the community by a national crisis, and the very survival of the society -- including the family and its children -- depended upon a quick and effective solution, day care in California received a widespread (although clearly not total) acceptance by the public, unlike programs in other states where the positive value of patriotism was not so clearly attached. But doubt lingered in the minds of many people about the desirability of mothers delegating their child-rearing responsibility to others.

The anticipated need for supervision of child care centers by a public agency which could provide administrative machinery, standards for operation and subsidies for users immediately galvanized a number of interest groups in the state into action. Some favored control by school districts, some by the State Department of Education, others by the State Department of Social Welfare and still others by the counties. Because of conflicting sentiments about who should be responsible for administration of the new program, the news media anticipated the introduction of a rash of bills in the state legislature, noting that:

> ". . . There appears to be a clash of opinion as to the fundamental concept of the nursery schools. Some hold that it is an educational problem, others see it as more of a social welfare

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[7] Karl Holton, county probationary officer, quoted in Foothill City Independent, January 14, 1943.

welfare problem. According to some the school teachers are better equipped to handle the schools and others feel that the social welfare workers are the ones to do the work" 8 /.

The proponents of placing the child care program under the supervision of the Department of Education eventually triumphed, for a number of reasons cited by the department:

1). The school is the community institution accepted by all people as a center for child care.

2). The school has budgeting and auditing facilities which can immediately take over the receipt and expenditures of the necessary funds.

3). The school has in many instances suitable housing and playgrounds for the school age program or has established standards for facilities upon the basis of which adequate situations may be selected.

4). The school has personnel trained in the understanding and care of children. These persons can assist in organizing and supervising the program and can help in the training of additional personnel.

5). Some school systems have already had experience in organizing preschool centers; in carrying on the health, protection, and training programs appropriate to preschool children. Recreation programs have also been conducted in connection with the schools 9 /.

It is likely that in addition to these factors, the role of a leadership cadre of dedicated professional educators in convincing the legislators that they had the demonstrated competence to carry out such a program was a strong factor in determining the final choice.

Although there continued to be 'much head-shaking and muttering' in the Legislature, Assembly Bill 307, a permissive statute authorizing the establishment of child care centers in California under the supervision of the State Department of Education, to be administered by local school districts, was introduced. The bill provoked much controversy. The original proposal

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[8] Los Angeles Times, January 12, 1943.

[9] California Program for the Care of Children of Working Parents, Vol. XII, No. 6, August, 1943, California State Department of Education, pp. 12-13, quoted in Cox, op.cit., p. 1.

to keep the centers open twenty-four hours a day, vigorously supported by the Parent Teachers Association and the League of Women Voters, was defeated by economy-minded legislators. Further, legislators were quite clear about their reluctance to have school district, county or state funds employed to finance the undertakings. Local communities in particular were not anxious to accept the burden of paying for child care centers. The only remaining source of revenue was noted by the press: "Federal government or other contributions can be accepted, but except for these, charges levied upon parents whose children are cared for are the only means offered for obtaining supporting funds"10/. The original bill was stripped of much of its controversial nature by the removal of the clause for appropriation of $250,000 in state funds.

The final bill, passed on January 26, 1943, in the California Assembly by an anti-climactic vote of 7 to 3, permitted local school districts to use their buildings, equipment, and administrative personnel (but not other district funds) in setting up centers for children two to sixteen years of age, authorized use of federal Lanham Act funds in the programs, and gave the State Department of Education general supervisory powers.

This legislation came in the nick of time. On February 1, only a week after its passage, the WPA agency which had operated federally-funded centers since 1932 was scheduled for liquidation. In December, 1942, Dr. Lois Meek Stolz, State Coordinator, Care of Children in Wartime, State Council of Defense, warned that the California wartime child care program would be 'seriously crippled' by the liquidation on February 1 of the WPA agency operating nursery schools, "unless district or local Boards of Education take quick action in securing federal funds from the national Lanham Act to continue the nursery schools" 11/. The Foothill City superintendent of schools had just requested the Board of Education to authorize him to do precisely that. The superintendent took note of the fact that 'the Lanham Act had allocated to it the sum of $300,000,000 in federal funds, earmarked for expenditure only in vital defense areas where the war situation had created extraordinary conditions' 12/. There was no question that Foothill City would qualify as

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[10] Foothill City Independent, January 26, 1943.

[11] In 1942, there were one-hundred and eleven WPA nursery schools in operation in the state; forty-nine were located in Northern California and sixty-two in Southern California. The first city in the state to receive Lanham Act funds was Vallejo. To operate the project there, the director announced a plan to bring trained teachers from other states, 'where the need is not so acute as there is in California', and to supplement their services by selected volunteer workers. Foothill City Independent, December 18, 1943.

[12] Foothill City Independent, December 15, 1942.

one of those vital areas. It was estimated that in January of 1943 there were eighty thousand women in the aircraft industry alone in Los Angeles County and that two hundred thousand would be employed by the following April; a large percentage of these working women, many of them mothers, were employed in Foothill City.

The Foothill City proposal requesting federal funds called for the establishment of four centers, located in sections of the community where the need for them was apparent and suitable housing accomodations were available. Before the ink was dry on the proposal, the school district had begun to set up administrative machinery for the program to deal with staffing and site requirements. By April of 1943, approval had been received from Federal Works Agency for the institution of a city-wide child care program until August 31 of that year, at which time application for renewal would be considered. The initial grant carried an appropriation of $80,288. The original intent had been a matching of federal to local funds on a 50/50 basis. Noting that Assembly Bill 307 prevented local or county agencies from meeting this cost, the superintendent protested that the $1.00 a day fee which would be required of parents would be prohibitive. The decision was amended to provide a larger subsidy by the federal government and the charge was set at $4.00 per week per nursery school child and $1.25 per week per child for extended day care. The superintendent announced to the community that the Federal Works Agency would undoubtedly reduce this fee for the benefit of children in low income areas of Foothill City.

The program was launched almost immediately. The nursery schools were to care for 20 to 60 children each, with one teacher assigned to each nine children. They were to be open from 7 A.M. to 6 P.M. on a Monday through Saturday schedule. Eight centers in all were established in Foothill City in 1943, some on school grounds. Sites depended on the amount of land public schools could spare; some of the former WPA nurseries became wartime child care centers 13/.

Although teachers in the day care program did not receive many of the benefits of elementary school personnel, they did receive commensurate financial reward. Teaching staff in the newly created program were to be employed according to three classes:

1). Those teachers having valid California teachers' credentials.

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[13] The federal government had agreed to match dollar for dollar all costs of the day care and extended day projects, provided such costs were not equal to more than two times as much as that which the schools would receive from tuition fees.

2). Those having completed two years of college training and four units of prescribed child training courses.

3). Those with a teacher's permit issued by the State Department of Education.

Nursery school and extended day care teachers were to be paid the same salary by the local board as paid to elementary teachers with such respective credentials during the regular school year. The head of the parent education department of the school district, one of the educational pioneers in the community and a specialist in early childhood education, was placed in charge of the nursery school program.

In spite of the fact that school districts had been authorized by the legislature to establish and maintain child care centers, the Department of Education made it clear that the centers were not part of the public school system. It was pointed out that legislation pertaining to child care was permissive, while that pertaining to school was mandatory; parents using child care were required to pay a fee, while public school was free. The fear of some groups and individuals that child care might be integrated into the public school system was the target of a statement of goals by the department:

> "The purpose of the child care center is to care for and supervise the children of working parents. While education can not be separated from good care and supervision, it is not the primary purpose of child care centers, and it is the primary and central function of the public school system" 14/.

Nevertheless, it was agreed that instruction and learning were an important part of child care program, and despite the disclaimer of the Department of Education which had the effect of protecting the schools from being required to share their hard-earned funds with the 'new boy in town' -- the day care centers -- the role of education was clear. Although many devices were used to avoid calling child care center employees 'teachers', the title crept back over the years, and in the altered climate in the 1960's the supervisor of Children's Centers for the Department of Education noted:

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[14] Cox, op. cit., p 2. (Underlining the author's own.)

> "We have come to realize that you can't just care for youngsters. It is a major responsibility to provide the best possible kind of learning program. The function of the child care centers of today has gone beyond the purpose of providing just 'custodial' care"15/.

Professional Leadership: The Roots of Good Care

The community soil of Foothill City was ripe, in 1943, for the implantation of a child care program under the aegis of the public school system. Children's Centers in that city evolved into a vital force for good care for young children of working mothers, influential not only locally but on a state-wide basis. This influence rested on the foundation which had been laid by the active leadership of elementary school educators committed to an emphasis on the experiental aspect of children's learning, as well as the group of dedicated individuals with varying professional backgrounds who had come together in the WPA nursery schools of the thirties. The network of close personal and professional relationships and the store of theoretical and practical knowledge which these groups had developed provided not only the know-how to meet the sudden challenge thrust upon the community by the war, but a firm foundation for the building of a stable system of child care centers. Although the original program was an emergency measure threatened for many years by crisis management and interim strategies, the system, instead of collapsing, grew stronger because of the creative leadership provided by these individuals. Many have remained active in the affairs of the Children's Centers for a quarter of a century.

The public school system of Foothill City included a number of educators influenced by John Dewey who put into practice in the Foothill City Elementary schools this child-oriented, 'learn-by-doing' philosophy of education. The movement did not go unchallenged by the more conservative citizens of the community, including the Board of Education 16/, but the teachers and administrators were strong enough in numbers and conviction to institute innovative programs which encouraged children to develop creativity, to use their 'eyes, ears, and noses' in learning, rather than their memories alone.

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[15] Ibid. In 1965, in recognition of this fact, the name 'Child Care Centers' disappeared and the name 'Children's Centers' was mandated into law by a bill in the California State Legislature. The idea of the centers, John Weber noted at the 1968 Children's Centers Parents Association conference, is to provide 'supervision and instruction' rather than 'care and supervision'.

[16] A newspaper editorial of 1943 warns darkly about the subversive ideas of the chief of the Division of Elementary Education of the State of California who had suggested teaching children about the economic and social facts of community life rather than 'sticking to the three R's'.

Coincidental with the sudden public awareness of the drastic need for care of children of working mothers, several educators came to the public school system of Foothill City with some revolutionary concepts in teaching young children. At the recommendation of one, the Maryland Training Course for teachers was brought to Southern California. Taken by Foothill City teachers, it was a four year course stressing observation of children, and was offered for either promotional or university credit. Some who enrolled dropped out because they didn't feel they could wait that long, but, as one participant observed:

> "Most of us completed it and were so glad we did. We began to draw hypotheses the second year. A funny thing happened to all of us -- we found that because we showed interest in the children, they were more interested in learning".

A former elementary school teacher who became the director of Childrens' Centers in Foothill City described the course as typical of the in-service training which supervisors sought for teachers in that community: 'We all felt that if you're going to know how to work with children, you must learn all you can about them".

This educator, recently retired after twenty-five years as director, had taught in Foothill City elementary schools for twenty years before moving into child care. She became involved in child care as one of the regular elementary teachers hired to supervise extended day program. Because her training and experience was with older children, she began taking a variety of courses in early childhood education and related fields which she continues today, twenty-five years later:

> "In Foothill City, we believed teachers had to be highly qualified, had to have courses. We knew salary schedules couldn't be raised unless the school board had some basis for doing so. Our teachers came either from WPA nurseries or were young, from the Midwest, eager for innovative ideas".

In addition to leadership from some elementary educators, Foothill City benefited greatly from the experience of the WPA nurseries which had been established in the depression to provide day care and employment. "There was one in the school where I taught", noted the former director. "It was a model for us to look at and copy". These nurseries contributed not only the ideas and inspiration of their dedicated and capable staff but also equipment and space for the many wartime child care centers which received WPA funding.

Finally, the personnel in Foothill City child care centers functioned as a strong cohesive unit. Teacher organization was present in the centers almost from the beginning; the major project was credentialling. The former director had represented Foothill City for many years on the California Teachers' Association Board: "All our bills for credentialling, salary increases, and a permanent program for the Children's Centers were supported by the California Teachers' Association". Impetus for upgrading personnel qualifications came from within the centers, rather than from external sources, because of the high visibility of rewards -- better care for the children and higher salaries for the teachers.

Stability and Change, Compatible Components in Day Care: The Case of Hill Street Children's Center

Hill Street Children's Center was the first of the wartime nurseries opened in Foothill City. Located in a trailer court set up for army families, the center was housed in a newly-constructed building (in which the school district parent education nursery program had been located) which met the specifications of a master plan used for all centers then built in the county. Twenty-odd years later the original building was still in use; and the head teacher, who had joined the staff shortly after the building was constructed in 1943, told us that obsolescence had finally begun to take hold. Over-crowding due to a heavy extended-day enrollment and deterioration of the physical structure, which had been built during war-time material and labor shortages, made it likely that the center would soon be moved to an area in which the need for services and the availability of modern accommodations were greater.

The years have brought changes to Hill Street Children's Center in a number of other ways. With the end of the war, the trailer court was closed, and the corner grocery store went out of business when the street was closed to become an on-ramp for the new freeway. Houses which had been new when the center was built are deteriorating after twenty-five years of transient occupancy. The neighborhood has undergone socio-economic as well as physical changes: once 'the' section of Foothill City, where all the 'old-timers' lived, it is now a low-income area from which families move to better housing as soon as they are able. Children come not only from the immediate neighborhood -- which has taken on the characteristics of an inner-city pocket of poverty, with an increasing proportion of Negroes, broken families, and substandard low-rent housing -- but from a cross section of the central city.

Serving a disadvantaged, transient population whose children have a variety of educational and emotional needs, Hill Street Children's Center appears to have developed a distinctive competence in meeting these needs. The teachers we observed displayed a substantial degree of awareness of the lack of stability in the lives of the children, and their special needs -- some requiring a great deal of affection, others a firm setting of limits, some, work on verbal skills, or perhaps just a good hot meal. The program which resulted was remarkably flexible and sensitive to individual needs.

We felt that both program and setting at Hill Street were unusual among publicly-sponsored child care facilities in the richness of the physical environment, the sensitivity to the needs of the individual -- particularly the disadvantaged -- child, the flexibility of program and the overall warmth of climate. The 'caring' atmosphere had clearly made an impact on the children; their response to activities consistently reflected a high degree of interest and involvement. The apathy, restlessness, and occasional chaos which we had observed in some day care facilities, both public and private, were absent at Hill Street. In their interaction with teachers the children appeared to confirm the observation which the head teacher, Mrs. S., had made during our interview: "I think the children are happy here".

A number of conditions can be identified which may operate for or against distinctive competence of this type in group care programs under public sponsorship. They include administrative structure and support, physical facilities, center size, and qualifications and commitment of staff.

Administrative Support

There is a tendency in some quarters to think of the California Children's Centers as a monolithic administrative structure, immune to the constraints which are operative in the private sector of day care. In fact, the State Department of Education, responsible for the enforcement of statutory provisions, and the local Board of Education, responsible for district policy, maintain tight control over personnel practices and physical setting as well as budget. Although Mrs. S. has many of the responsibilities of the director of a private facility she has limited autonomy, with no control over staffing and fee policy, and comparatively little over material resources. While she is free of the constant possibility of unannounced inspection visits by licensing consultants, she is nevertheless continuously responsible to her superiors in the school system hierarchy for competent performance of her duties.

As in private nurseries, municipal agencies -- the Departments of Health, Building and Safety, and Fire -- make periodic inspection of physical facilities. Maintenance is provided through the school system and while the center does not receive a bill, often it does not get service either without cajoling and/or threats. Possibly the greatest problem for Mrs. S. in a building as old as Hill Street is the plumbing. On one occasion she was obliged, after repeated and futile attempts to get service from the office, to deliver an ultimatum:"'Either you send someone out to fix those toilets or I'm going to close the center today'. . . someone finally came!" Mrs. S. has apparently found that the application of firmness cannot be restricted to children alone.

On balance, a bureaucratic administrative structure can either promote or detract from good care. Administered by local school districts, Children's Centers tend to be a barometer of local interest in programs for young children, and their quality may vary markedly from one district to the next. Fortunately, the community of Foothill City has had a long history of recognition by some administrators, as well as teachers, of the importance of child-rearing environments outside of the home, not merely as custodial facilities but as settings where valuable learning and necessary experiences take place.

This interest has not always been shared by the entire community, nor by all the branches of the public school system. The former director of the Children's Centers in Foothill City comments:

> "We (i.e., the professionals in education, health and welfare: teachers, social workers, etc.) just weren't conventional. We in the Children's Centers are still looked down on by city college teachers. We're lowest in the pecking order; the high school looks down on elementary and elementary looks down on preschool".

The Children's Centers in Foothill City are irrevocably bound up in the political, social and economic currents which flow through the community and control the decision-making apparatus of the school system. Superintendents often have their own 'pet peeves' and causes which tend to influence decisions of the board. The contemporary emphasis in American society on public relations is as strong in Foothill City as in other communities, but the Children's Centers program has different meanings for different groups. While the administration tends to perceive it as a social service, the teachers perceive it as an educational service. The latter have long been and continue to be active in interpreting the role of the centers, and of good child care programs to the community through membership in community organizations.

Size and Physical Facilities

Enrollment at Hill Street Children's Center has fluctuated widely over the years in response to external conditions. In the beginning, the center was full and 'carried' the other centers. With the closing of the street, the opening of the freeway, the population movement to outlying areas and the series of financial crises in which the Children's Centers, until 1965, found themselves, enrollment soared and dipped with the dizzying irregularity of a carnival roller coaster. The fear of impending extinction which hung over all Children's Centers from their inception until 1957, when removal of the termination date was accomplished by legislation, was felt even more strongly by Hill Street, whose marginality was increased by its bankruptcy in the enrollment economy 17/. The Board of Education would remind the center "You are the little nursery. One of the centers will be closed and you know which one that will be".

The strategy which the center developed to cope with the unpredictable drops in enrollment involved the 'borrowing' of kindergartners from the extended-day program in the adjacent elementary school. Although operation of the two units, -- elementary school and children's center -- are separate and distinct, they exchange services when the benfits are mutual.

Only recently have the Children's Centers been able to breathe easily financially and now that the long-awaited day has arrived, Hill Street will most likely become a victim of progress. The topography of Foothill City has changed; the housing in the area is being torn out and the 'interesting' people are gone. Three new centers are to be constructed with state funds, several in outlying areas which heretofore had been considered 'too well off' to need them. Hill Street will most likely be moved to a former adult education center on the main highway, for three reasons: 1) the property is already owned by the school district, 2) parking facilities are available, and 3) access is convenient. The proposed location and the facilities for extended day care are felt to be greatly superior to those of the present site.

Small size, in terms of both enrollment and physical plant, has clearly been both a blessing and a curse for Hill Street. Since Hill Street was one of the smallest public centers, along both dimensions, in which we observed, it appeared that its size was at least in part responsible for the quality of program, making possible the strongly individualized child-oriented teacher behavior patterns which were exhibited. The teacher-child ratio set by the Foothill City Board of Education 18/ has been maintained consistently over

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[17] Marginal programs in the California public school system tend to suffer from the 'enrollment economy' to which Burton Clark refers in his analysis of adult education (Clark, 1958). A drop in enrollment of students means loss of state funds based on average daily attendance. Those courses or programs which do not draw enough attendees are the first to be removed from the list of applicants clamoring for funds. In recent years the drop in enrollment at Hill Street has been a constant source of anxiety, since a center which cannot justify its existence in attendance figures, on which state aid is calculated, is in real jeopardy.

[18] 21 - 25 children: 2 teachers plus 1 half-time
26 - 30 " 3 " " 1 "
31 - 35 " 4 " " 1 "
36 - 44 " 5 " " 1 "
45 - 55 " 6 " " 1 "

the years and presently provides a proportion of better than 1 to 10; at the time of our interview Hill Street had an enrollment of 60 children with an average daily attendance of fifty [19] and a staff of six teachers, including the head teachers whose job performance includes working with the children when required, according to her discretion. Nevertheless, physical space has become inadequate due in part to the expanded extended day care program:

> "We're very cramped -- the bed (cots for rest period) situation is terrible. They (the Board of Education) are going to add on to two new centers, but not ours; because it was poorly built to begin with, it will have to be replaced".

Everything is, of course, relative and in many urban ghetto settings Hill Street would most likely appear spacious and attractive. By comparison with new facilities, however, Hill Street looks its part -- that of a twenty-five year old war casualty; in addition, upgraded standards for building construction relating to ability to withstand earthquakes -- California's own Doomsday Book supplement -- render it obsolete. Some alterations have been made to create more storage space, but it is still inadequate. Scheduling has been adjusted to alleviate the physical pressures; Mrs. S. points out: "Every morning after juice teachers have their own group for an activity. I've had to have my group at 8 A.M. during free play time because finding a room for every teacher is a real problem".

In spite of the constraints Mrs. S. feels from lack of space, it is not apparent to the observer. Because staffing, scheduling of activities and grouping of children are flexible, traffic patterns and program appear to flow smoothly. Children are given as much freedom of movement as possible and grouping is flexible; while children know who "their" teacher is, teachers take turns in duties and responsibilities, and children may move from one area to another as long as a teacher is on duty there. Groups are formally separated only for lunch and rest.

The yard of the center, covered with asphalt and surrounded by a chain-link fence, is typical in construction of Children's Centers outdoor facilties, but the shape and equipment are not. An irregular L-shape, narrow and tree-shaded at one end, where interest groups (i.e., doll corner, a 'locomotive' made of child-sized boxes, end to end, a series of climbing boards and barrels) are located, it avoids the sterility of public-school playground settings. At one point was a small square of sandy soil, where children could sit on the edge of the asphalt and dig -- an unusual and serendipitous feature.

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[19] Present enrollment is between fifty and fifty-five children.

Although the overall shape and size of the yard was a chance factor, dictated by the space the elementary school could provide, the head teacher had exercised her skill in judging the children's needs by arranging equipment in the yard as she saw fit. As head teacher, Mrs. S. has the autonomy to plan arrangement of equipment and may request from the district whatever she feels is required; the likelihood of getting it, however, on an already tight budget is another matter. Her husband built a number of pieces of play apparatus himself, including the train. Mrs. S. has found from long experience that this is often the most effective way to get new equipment: "You can get things repaired but it's hard to get new things".

Teachers at Hill Street were rated by our observers as teaching an unusually high number of lessons in awe and wonder. A staff oriented to children's needs for this sort of learning is supported by the physical environment. The center shares with the elementary school a small fenced-in area known as 'the jungle', an unused, locked-up area to which the child care staff has a key. The head teacher described its unusual nature:

> "There are trees and tall bushes, fallen leaves on the ground and places to climb. Often the children find dead birds and insects in there. It gives them a great opportunity to explore".

The physical resources within the center are broadened by a program rich in such varied experiences as walks to the library, the river, the park, the fire station, stores, and so forth 20/. Mrs. S's. expectations for the children are for them "to receive as many experiences as possible, to explore completely the world around us".

Staff Qualifications and Commitment

To the extent that day care facilities in Foothill City compete among themselves, the competition tends to be less for clientele than for staff. This fact has resulted in a type of running educational gamble over the years, with the players being continually required to up the ante to stay in the game. The principal bettors have been the Children's Centers and the Foothill City Day Nursery, the long-established charitable agency described in the previous chapter 21/. To meet the challenge posed by the

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[20] Field trips away from the center were unusual occurrences in many of the programs in which we observed.

[21] In the opinion of one informed observer, the involvement of many affluent and influential community members with Foothill City Day Nursery precluded the passage of a tax over-ride, which would have made the Children's Centers wealthier than the day nursery: "The Board (of Education) would never have permitted this".

existence of the day nursery, a former director pointed out, the Children's Centers 'had to be good'.

The odds on acquiring qualified staff favor the Children's Centers, since their salaries, though lower than in public elementary schools 22/, are higher than in private nursery schools. They are thus a logical place for teachers to begin after completing the necessary training -- especially teachers who seek continued training, since this is required, and in part provided, by the school district. In her role as head teacher Mrs. S is expected to conduct in-service training and plan for special workshops. After twenty-five years at Hill Street and a number of years of elementary teaching before that, she herself continues to take course work to keep up with the latest developments in early childhood education. In response to our question as to whether her attitudes had changed over the years, she replied:

> "Oh, definitely! Early childhood education is really becoming an important field -- concepts are changing. It's through my school courses and professional contacts that I keep up with this change. In addition, I read a great deal".

Although all hiring and firing of teachers is done through the Board of Education, the head teacher is responsible for developing a staff which can function effectively both individually and as a group. While Mrs. S. feels she has a good staff at present, qualified by training, experience, and personality to work well with children and each other, she knows on the basis of past experience that teachers may be assigned elsewhere at any time. Some, those whose commitment to the children is deeper than to the salary, choose to stay -- but these are few. Mrs. S. feels that the Children's Centers are too often considered a stepping stone to the status and salaries that are offered in the elementary schools, and she considers upgrading in both areas to be of pressing need in the district. While the Foothill City Teachers Association assists the teachers in Children's Centers in getting pay increments 23/, it still tends to 'look down' on them professionally,

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[22] Children's Center teachers earn the same annual income as their elementary counterparts, but they have only one month's vacation and work a longer day.

[23] Foothill City Teachers Association, in which membership costs each teacher $65.00 to $75.00 yearly in out-of-pocket dues, brings pressure to bear on the Board of Education to achieve higher teacher salaries. Their help is essential to Children's Center personnel: 'We're marginal, not part of the school system, and we need some one to back us". Hill Street teachers also belong to the California Teachers Association, which lobbies in the state legislature through a special provision for the Children's Centers. Mrs. S. also pays yearly membership fees in the Southern California Association for the Education of Young Children and the Association for Childhood Education International.

according to Mrs. S. It is from the Southern California Association for the Education of Young Children that the Children's Centers teachers receive the most guidance in teaching theory and practice.

Not only do some teachers leave as they complete requirements for an elementary credential, others are assigned to the Center only on a substitute basis, subject to transfer at any time. Some teachers remain substitutes by choice; although they are entitled to no health insurance, retirement benefits, or paid vacations while in this status, they can choose to take their summers off and/or work shorter hours. A center like Hill Street which has uncertain enrollment is likely to be staffed largely with substitute personnel, to avoid excessive commitments by the school district. At the time of our observational study Hill Street had only two teachers assigned on a permanent basis.

The personal and professional competence of the head teacher may be the most important single factor determining quality of a Children's Center and Hill Street benefits from both the skill and devotion of Mrs. S. One reason for the maintenance of a smooth-running program would appear to be the fact that the head teacher perceives this to be her main job function. Both in conception and performance, her role involves total involvement in center activities, including staff, children and parents. Her position is an omnibus one in which she has begun to feel inadequate, due to the number of functions she is expected to perform; the indications are that not her competence but her physical ability to cope may be flagging due to the enormity of the task. In addition to actual work with the children, she works closely with teachers, relieving them when necessary and conducting regular staff meetings 24/; she supervises non-teaching staff and the requisitioning of

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[24] "We have meetings often and I tell them things constantly -- I ask them for lesson plans. Sometimes I have to do this too often; there are not enough teachers who take the initiative to do things on their own. Right now we're planning our summer program -- every one (not only in Foothill City but other communities) is pressing hard on these summer plans to avoid riots. We're having a workshop here Saturday for all the teachers -- I've been working day and night getting ready for that".

supplies 25/ as well as maintenance of equipment; she formulates program and time-scheduling, sets up workshops and supervises in-service training; she does all the book work of the center and handles admission of each child; and she works closely with parents, both in group meetings and in day-to-day contacts 26/.

The job of Mrs. S. is thus the equivalent of a combination owner - director and head teacher in a private school, as well as employee of an organization to which she must justify her decisions and whose decisions she, in turn, must carry out. When asked her definition of a good head teacher, she commented:

> "She has to be able to work with people -- and to be patient, calm, and collected. I'm given too much to do. I have to take work

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[25] One of Mrs. S's biggest headaches is wresting from the budget-conscious school district the necessary food supplies. During the course of the interview she was obliged to take up arms -- via the telephone -- in pursuit of sugar, which had not been forthcoming from the main office for a month and a half: "I don't see why, with as much money as we have, we can't have sugar. Often I have to buy things out of my own pocket. We had a stock of tuna we'd built up over the months; they (district officials) came and took it to give to one of the other centers". Hill Street is in a highly marginal position in relation to these other centers -- a "poor relation" in the Foothill City Children's Center family -- because it cannot consistently produce a full enrollment and must 'borrow' children from other centers.

[26] "I see them everyday; they come in and talk to me after work. If this helps, I'm glad -- I enjoy it". Mrs. S. sees her work with parents as one of her most important duties and encourages them to take an active interest in the program.

Friction between parents and Children's Centers occasionally develops, primarily over fee policy and center hours, and the head teacher must bear the burden when such feelings of antagonism occur. There is a frequent tendency toward parental tardiness with respect to both matters; notes Mrs. S. "With parents as well as children, you must be firm, or they will take advantage of the situation. You must set limits -- rules about how early a child may come in, or how late he can stay". Further, parents are not always eager to report raises in salary; when Mrs. S. discovers discrepancies and has to raise the fee accordingly, parents seldom react with enthusiasm.

> home at night. Sometimes I work a twelve hour day; other days I'm here until 7 o'clock at night. It's mostly paper work. It's really hard if your staff doesn't carry the ball. The housekeeper's job is terribly demanding -- we really need two housekeepers, an assistant for the cook, and someone to do clerical work".

It is not only herself and the housekeeper for whom she sees unmet needs, but the teachers. Although she is not convinced that high standards for academic preparation mean better teachers ("Foothill City had one of the finest head teachers I've ever known who didn't have these course requirements") she would hate to see qualification requirements lowered because:

> "We need better salaries 27/. Non-credentialled teachers get only one month off -- they get so exhausted. They work an eight-hour day and still have lesson plans to prepare. We should have six hours of teaching and two hours to prepare our work".

Because the head teacher and teacher role concept in the Hill Street Children's Center makes such complex demands, far greater than that of a custodial or adult-oriented one, on staff, they carry a burden not easily recognized by the casual observer, many of whom consistently refer to the 'baby-sitting' function of public 'child care' centers. The value system of the Children's Centers in California, of which Hill Street is an outstanding example, has always been founded on the concept of group care for young children as a learning experience. Mrs. S. is a pioneer of the old school whose commitment reaches above and beyond what might seem to be the call of reasonable duty.

Foothill City Center, Looks to the Future
New Dimensions of Child Care

The coming of new compensatory education programs, such as Head Start, has brought a marked change in the attitudes of school districts regarding preschool programs. The goals and methods of the Children's Centers and Head Start are in many ways similar. When a new director of Children's Centers was appointed in Foothill City recently, it seemed appropriate that administration of the two programs be combined and that a man be chosen to direct them.

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[27] Teacher qualification evidenced by units of course work is the simplest means of justifying salary increases to the Board of Education.

The early educators in Foothill City were not a group of feminists out to champion women's rights, but an aggressive unconventional group of pioneers who just happened to be predominantly female, in a field which has been traditionally, and unfortunately, a matriarchy. The former director of Children's Centers in Foothill City welcomed the recent appointment of a male director with enthusiasm:

> "We aren't like little old ladies, afraid of male competition. We want what's best for children. His being a former principal gives him an insight into the working of things, both with respect to the children and the administration. He knows the channels, the subtle things to do, the indirect way -- and the money that's going to be available".

The preoccupation with early childhood education precipitated by programs such as Head Start has aroused Foothill City, as at no time since the wartime crisis of the early 1940's, to the need for innovative approaches. The concern now, as before, is to attract people with both administrative and teaching experience, professionals who will be included at the decision-making level. The appointment of a former elementary school principal to the position of director reflects, on one hand, the recognition that there is need for the involvement of competent, experienced, and dedicated male personnel in a field once the almost exclusive dominion of women. On the other hand, it emphasizes a growing trend towards the coordination of elementary and preschool programs in the public school system.

Mr. A. brings experience as a teacher, social worker and administrator to his position as Supervisor of Early Childhood Education programs in Foothill City. While other supervisors in the district are primarily administrators rather than curriculum specialists, Mr. A's position is more comparable to that of elementary principal in his responsibility for program supervision. Because he is new to the specialized field of early childhood education, a highly skilled Head Teacher on leave from her post in one of the Foothill City Children's Centers has been assigned to work with Mr. A. in a consulting capacity. She also provides a liaison with head teachers like Mrs. S. in the individual centers, who have known and respected her professional abilities for a number of years.

Upgrading teacher qualifications is one of Mr. A's active concerns. The district expects Children's Center teachers to work towards the elementary credential, given impetus by a salary incentive plan. Teachers are encouraged to share, at work and in meetings, ideas from courses they've taken. Mr. A. meets regularly with Children's Centers head teachers and, separately, with a group made up of one teacher from each Head Start site, acting as a site delegate 28/. Wage scales are a constant source of concern: "We keep working toward salary increases".

While the organizational structure provides a number of advantages to personnel, there are some dysfunctions in the system The career ladder for Children's Center staff ends abruptly with the position of head teacher. Mrs. S., who has taught at Hill Street for over twenty-five years, the last eight years in the position of head teacher , has reached the top level on the salary increment scale which is geared to number of units of course work completed. Although her experience and responsibility continue to increase, her position and salary remain fixed. The only options left open to upwardly mobile Children's Center personnel are to move into elementary teaching or to become supervisors in other districts.

As in the beginning of programs for early childhood education in Foothill City, the present-day priorities establish professional growth of teachers as the most important factor. Curriculum improvement is a close second, while improvement of facilities is rated third in order of importance 29/. While Mr. A. acknowledges overcrowding to be a deterrent to program quality, he does not feel that physical appearance or a large amount of space per se improves care to any measurable degree.

Foothill City, past, present and probably future, offers an example of a school district in which concern for early childhood education was implemented (in WPA nurseries) before Children's Centers were begun, received ongoing support from some elementary school teachers and administrators philosophically committed to the importance of active learning in the early years, and continues to be effectively demonstrated in programs like Hill Street Children's Center. Not all districts have provided these advantages. But in a few, of which Los Altos, described below, will serve as our example, determined and skillful leadership by one or a few Children's Center personnel have converted people in power to the cause, with excellence of program the result.

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[28] Head Start teachers must qualify for the Children's Center Permit for initial employment, and are encouraged to work toward the credential. The salary scale for Head Start and Children's Center teachers is the same, but Head Start teachers have a shorter work day. In Los Angeles County no Head Start programs offer full day care.

[29] This assessment of needs is an inversion of that made by private owners who often consider quality of physical facilities as a first priority.

Effective Personal Leadership in Public Day Care: The Case of Los Altos

> "I would love to teach there! The director is growth-oriented. It's her view of things and people; she sees and nurtures growth, not in a big-ugly-mother sort of way. She's used the capacities and unique abilities of her staff effectively. . . even the cook is involved with the kids!"
>
> --Field notes, Observational Study of Day Care

Children's Centers in California vary considerably in quality. Centers within a school district may differ, often as a result of chance factors; even more notably, some districts may be characterized by generally mediocre programs, while others offer nearly consistent excellence. In Southern California there are several smaller districts in which a director of unusual competence, holding her position over many years, has succeeded in establishing outstanding programs throughout the district.

In the Los Altos school district the Children's Centers' director, Mrs. J., has been director since the program began. There are three centers in the district, and she maintains her office in one of them, Meadowbrook, where she can be in close continual contact with children and teachers and parents, as well as school district administrators. Meadowbrook was one of the first public centers to be established in California, at the same point in time at which Hill Street Children's Center also opened.

Before the present building -- constructed in 1943 on school property according to the standard master plan -- was erected, Mrs. J. and her staff conducted a program for two hundred and fifty children of working mothers in a dance hall, and later accommodated another one hundred and fifty in a church. "There were absolutely no facilities at the time", she recalls, and the haste with which the present building was constructed during wartime with scarce, ersatz materials has contributed to its present obsolescence. The inadequacy of the physical plant has not been a serious deterrent; the strength of a good program implemented by a highly-qualified staff has outweighed structural defects 30/.

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[30] The outdoor yard compensates strongly for inadequacies in the building. It is unusual in its incorporation of a large grassy area, where children paint or gather on the grass for stories away from the churning activity of bicycle riders beyond them. The area immediately behind the building provides asphalt and sand areas, the asphalt for wheel toys and group games, the sand for digging and to cushion the ground beneath swings and climbing apparatus. These activity areas have not been divided by fences, thereby providing greater flexibility and freedom of movement; the paved sections provide clear pathways between them. The natural cover offers a pleasurable respite from the sea of asphalt which extends beyond the chain-link fence to the elementary school beyond.

Since the beginning of her commitment to the Children's Centers, which began over twenty-five years ago and was preceded by professional training and experience in elementary education. Mrs. J. has always perceived the care of young children as primarily an educational rather than a social welfare function, in spite of the fact that she works with children and families who experience many socio-economic difficulties. She feels that this philosophy about children and child care, which she shares with her colleagues has been the main reason for the retention of the public Children's Centers in California: "People wanted good education, not merely custodial care, for children, and this program was a part of the Department of Education". Mrs. J. feels that a social work emphasis would have been less acceptable to the legislature in California:

> "If you stop and think, where would you want your child? You would want him in a place where he would gain learning and understanding. I feel that educators have more real compassion for children than social workers who are mainly concerned with peoples' problems".

Mrs. J. saw, very early and very clearly, the goal toward which she has worked steadily over the years: a sound educationally-oriented program, which necessitated the presence of a well-qualified staff in terms of training and experience in early childhood education 31/. She realized that to achieve this goal it would be necessary for her to convince the school district of the need for a competitive salary and benefit schedule for Los Altos Children's Center teachers. While day care has been the stepchild of the public educational system in some districts, this has not been the case in Los Altos, "Primarily, I suppose", Mrs. J. observes, "because I'm a busy-body. I've actively contacted everyone in the school system who might ever have any contact with the Children's Center program".

In addition Mrs. J. saw the importance of achieving the support of state legislators, who were for the most part far removed from the field in knowledge and interest. Early in her career as director in Los Altos, when Lanham Act funds were withdrawn, she extended an invitation to a legislator from the district to come to the center and observe the program; during his visit she explained the program and its goals in detail. Later she discovered that he had gone over to the elementary school grounds adjacent to the center "to see if we were really doing the sort of things I had told him about. He evidently decided that we were and was tremendously impressed".

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31 "The preschool experience is the most important thing for a child's future success. Good teachers need to have more knowledge and more sensitivity with preschool children than at any other age". Mrs. J's convictions, held from the beginning of her long career, are now more widely recognized by the larger society with the advent of Head Start and compensatory education programs for young children.

He came to a parents' meeting, at which he had been invited to speak by Mrs. J., and then returned to the legislature where he vigorously backed the Children's Center program and came to be known as the 'father of the Children's Centers'.

Interpretive activities such as these on the part of day care administrators, accompanied by parental urging, have historically kept the centers before the public eye in California, particularly in the legislature from which all monetary blessings flow. The role which communication has played in the survival and continued improvement of public child care is clearly illustrated by Mrs. J's activities in interpreting to the community the value and the needs of good child care program.

The program which we observed twenty years after that earlier, more crucial visit gave abundant evidence of the qualities which had apparently inspired the legislator's total commitment. The role concept expressed by one of the teachers eloquently describes the climate of the center: "My hopes for each child are that he can take something home worth remembering each day -- not just a picture he has drawn but an experience to be cherished". The attitudes of this teacher were shared by the statements of the three other teachers interviewed; they indicated a high degree of consistency in their feelings about children and the experiences good day care should provide. Further, their attitudes were clearly reflected in their observed behavior. Strongly child-oriented, their behavior conveyed affection and at the same time set firm limits which respected the feelings of the child, a teacher manner which 'lets him know somebody cares'. While program tempo was relaxed, teachers were active in encouraging development of verbal skills and intellectual learning.

The unusual combination of flexible, child-oriented program and high frequency of learning experiences demands a staff possessing equally unusual qualifications. Those of Miss L, teacher of the 3's and 4's, demonstrate the high degree of staff competence which Mrs. J's long-range plan has yielded. Twenty-five years of age, she had taught at Los Altos for two and half years, and had had two years of experience in another Children's Center. Her background in formal training exhibited a formidable array of course work: Five and one-half years of college including a B.A. in education and a minor in art, a General Elementary and Primary credential, and additional courses in early childhood education and curriculum planning. Her ultimate plan was to acquire a credential in early childhood education if and when it is offered in the state of California.

Typically one might expect a teacher like Miss L. to move on to a more highly paid job in the school system. It is likely that this would be the case in most districts, including Foothill City. As in Foothill City, Children's Center teachers in Los Altos earn the same annual salary as elementary teachers 32/ but work more time for it; salary increments are tied to educational level. In both communities the achievement of this salary level represents strategic planning and long-sustained effort 33/, and in both it has succeeded in attracting qualified teachers to the nursery program, though not always in keeping them. Mrs. J's success in retaining teachers has at least two additional dimensions: her efforts to identify and employ those applicants whose particular interest is in young children, and her ability to provide excellent working conditions, especially in personal terms. Teachers as well as children in Los Altos Children's Centers are given encouragement and stimulated to continued learning and growth; they have opportunities to observe in other programs, to meet with consultants to discuss individual children, and to gain frequent recognition from a director who, in her rounds of the centers, pays attention to teachers, children, parents, maintenance staff -- to what people are doing and how they are feeling.

Mrs. J. has worked hard to secure administrative and legislative back-up for her day-to-day efforts. In the school district her goal was to achieve a regular salary schedule based on educational background; she perceived the combination of teacher salaries, qualification, and good program to be inseparable. The district in which Los Altos is located is unusual in that lines of communication are and always have been 'exceptionally open'. This openness is due primarily, Mrs. J. feels, to the attitude of the superintendent, who is

> " . . . truly interested in children and has the philosophy that everybody needs to know what is going on. Consequently, the entire school budget is public and every member of the staff has a full accounting of the money which is available to every other member including salaries, etc".

Mrs. J. and the superintendent do not always agree:

> "We quite often disagree, sometimes violently. We've had some knock-down-and-drag-outs! He is the type of man with whom one can come to an agreement. We can talk it over and reach some kind of decision . Occasionally, I have not liked his decisions at the time, but have come later to realize their wisdom".

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[32] The salary schedule for elementary teachers in the Los Altos district is relatively high.

[33] There are neighboring school districts whose Children's Center teachers are paid on a different (lower) scale than elementary teachers, regardless of their educational qualifications, and they lack the option of increasing their salaries through further education.

Mrs. J's good fortune in having administrative superiors with whom she can work effectively extends back to the original superintendent, who "in true gentlemanly fashion" supported her "completely" in her efforts to retain the child care program.

What has occurred in the Los Altos district has had a great deal to do with communication; it has also depended to a great extent on Mrs. J's skill in achieving it. Many districts have good programs but have not, in her own words, "gotten very far with school boards on standards and salaries". In response to a query concerning her method of achieving success in attainment of goals, she comments: "I always try to be realistic and then lay a plan". She has laid her plans not only within her school district, but in joint efforts with her colleagues in the Children's Center Supervisors and Directors Association, a statewide group which she helped to organize in the early days of Children's Centers. Within this organization Mrs. J. is one of the cadre of old-time, dedicated, innovative leaders, nearly all of whom have served in some official capacity from president to board member. A number of committees work on proposals seeking funding of program development; active committees include those working on housing and on teacher credentialling. The Association provides ammunition for its members in dealing with their individual districts; for example, Mrs. J. conducted research for the Association on teachers' salaries in all the Los Angeles County districts, a feat which presented some difficulties. (Noted one director: "People would rather tell you the color of their underwear than their salary"). The next strategic move was to get together a meeting at which the superintendent of the Los Altos school district spoke to the directors who were present, supporting equal pay for child care teachers and discussing with them in very realistic terms what they needed to do to get the superintendent in their districts to adopt it. This meeting, Mrs. J. points out, was a great help and made it easier for superintendents in other districts to justify their upgrading of salaries by quoting the speaker.

The Association also maps out programs for presentation in the legislature. Mrs. J's own efforts within her district were successful in achieving good salaries for her teachers, but not in securing a new building for Meadowbrook, as long as the local district was required by the state to provide the money. Although the Los Altos district agreed in principle to the need for a new building, its budget, already stretched to the limit, would not permit the allocation of funds for construction. But recent passage of state legislation, largely as a result of efforts by the supervisors and directors (who have developed skill in motivating the Children's Center Parents Association to bring simultaneous pressure on their representatives in Sacramento), has removed this hurdle. Assembly Bill 891 allocates the the sum of $3,800,000 from the General Fund of the State Department of Education for the purpose of constructing Children's Centers. In a foreword the authors of the bill note:

> "The legislature hereby declares that it is in the interest of the state and of the people therof for the state to provide assistance to school districts and to county superintendents of schools for the construction of Children's Centers facilities. Children's Centers are of general concern and interest to all the people of the state and the education and care of children of working parents are a joint obligation of both the state and local agencies operating Children's Centers.
>
> "In enacting this article, the Legislature considers that the greatest need is to provide Children's Center facilities for the education and care of children during the time the sole parent is at work making the family economically self-sufficient or is in school or in training to gain economic self-responsibility. The legislature recognizes the need to encourage the provision of additional Children's Center facilities to permit more families to become economically self-sufficient" 34/.

In spite of the effectiveness of such statewide efforts to improve public day care, large discrepancies in quality of program still exist from one district to the next, as well as within some districts. As Los Altos demonstrates, strength of leadership has been a crucial factor in determining which Children's Centers will remain perennially marginal and which are able to draw fruitfully on the resources of their school districts. Such leadership requires skill in communicating to others the nature and value of group day care. It also requires a personal quality which all of the directors of good day care programs appear to possess, namely, a positive self-image, a feeling of both competence and confidence in one's ability to develop program and the knowledge of its importance. This provides the strength of conviction which has enabled Mrs. J. to fight patiently and valiantly over the years for the issues in which she believes. For the energetic pioneers, adversity has provided not only frustration but challenge. In Mrs. J's own somewhat wistful words:

> "Now that preschool programs are becoming recognized, accepted and adopted, this marks the end to what, I think, was a sort of crusading dedication which the people who struggled to maintain the Children's Centers felt for the children".

However, new challenge exists in the need to define the relationships to be established between Children's Centers and the new compensatory

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[34] Education Code, State of California, Article 7.5, Ch. 10, Div. 14, Section 19699.21.

education programs. Like Mr. A. in Foothill City, Mrs. J. is also the director of Head Start in the Los Altos district 35/, because, she assumes, the superintendent knew she was "an adequate person who knew something about program for young children and could put it together fast". On her own initiative, she had laid out a program for Head Start before funds became available, although the district did not approve it at the time.

Since 1965 she has worked to extend her convictions about good program for young children into Head Start as well as Children's Centers. In the beginning,

> "it was an advantage to be able to choose aides who were not only poor but competent. It has become much more difficult to run a good Head Start program now that the poverty level requirements are so tightly drawn. The early programs worked much better because some of the children were not at the poverty level. I feel an integrated program was much better for children because they could see peers who behaved differently than they did and they were not learning their values only from school".

Her ongoing concern in respect to Federally funded programs is for

> ". . . stability (which) is a prime requisite for good programs for children, not only because children need it, but because staff who are working with children need it as well. They need to know what sort of framework they are functioning in and have time to get their bearings in order to work well with children".

In answer to our questions concerning new day care legislation, Mrs. J. replied:

> "The really big fight is going to be over compensatory education and how it is to fit into the overall program of child care. It is most important that the Social Security day care programs be placed under the administration of Children's Centers as a parent organization and run through the administrative framework of the Children's Centers".

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[35] Before Head Start was added to her duties she reported to the Assistant Superintendent in charge of curriculum. The switch to the Assistant Superintendent in charge of personnel was disturbing to her since she felt that "it was very important that the preschool program not be divorced from what might be viewed as a legitimate educational effort of the school". She soon realized that it made no difference and the arrangement has been entirely satisfactory. A member of the district administrative staff, she attends all meetings.

Summary:
Strengths and Weaknesses of Public Day Care

When Children's Centers are good, they can be very, very good. When they are not, they are not, perhaps, quite horrid -- but the informal comments of our several observers, made after their more discouraging days in public centers, can speak for themselves:

Center A

> "Will the study show the damage one head teacher can do to a school by imposing impossible adult standards? It's like Montessori in reverse where every exploratory step leads to failure, never to success. In the early morning the teacher doled out one crayon and piece of paper to each child with the contractual agreement that they would put them away in such and such a manner when they were finished. This attitude seems to permeate the total atmosphere and nobody strikes me as being generous with affection, materials, time, or understanding. (The sand stays in the sandbox and the children stay out of the sandbox)".
>
> "Many young, inexperienced staff members -- dull yard, vast indoor wasteland!"

Center B

> "A somewhat chaotic, unpleasant atmosphere -- generally inexperienced staff -- physical space poorly designed and utilized. Children appear to be getting nothing out of the program, if there is such a thing".
>
> "Overall the impression here was of a lack of control. The head teacher seems to be relatively ineffective and the teachers seem to be quite upset by our "surveillance". . . . I think they are unsure of themselves and what is expected of them. Out-of-bounds behavior was frequent with the teachers being extremely demanding and punitive with the children. (In this center things probably do go better when there are no observers)".

Center C

> "Very institutional".
>
> "The schedule pushes the children around; teachers are actually with their groups very little".

"Rather heavy emphasis on guidance and restriction here, but not much else. Teachers don't seem to function as a unit. Dreary physical set-up".

Center D

A large inner-city center with all-Negro enrollment. The staff was formerly both white and Negro, but integration made for problems, and now it is entirely black.

"Program and surroundings sterile".

"Children are squelched and fitted into the overall machine. What they're learning is how to conform in a segregated world".

All the centers unobjectively characterized above 36/ were large (over 60 children -- two had over 100) and were afflicted with problems of bureaucracy which the staff could not solve. The vast "indoor wasteland" belongs to a new building constructed according to the district's most recent specifications, but is utilized unimaginatively to maintain formal order rather than to encourage the children's active involvement.

With increased size goes increased administrative complexity and the built-in possibility of an increasingly inhuman environment in which personal idiosyncrasies have no place. Skilled and concerned leadership is required in this context to create and to maintain flexible settings for daily living and learning. Especially in large centers in large school districts, a bristling fortification of regulations and schedules is available to defend insecure or unconcerned personnel against ever having to innovate or to pay attention to individual needs or to do anything but provide a bland, safe, sterile environment in which adults and children can get through one long day after another. To do otherwise against such odds requires commitment, skill and stamina; and in districts in which Children's Centers are the perennial poor relation, the crumbs which are available fail to nourish the staff or motivate them to do their best for children.

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[36] Our observers were expected to use a coding scheme dispassionately in recording data to be quantified -- and encouraged to express their global impressions later. Some of these impressions led to fruitful revision of the formal data-collecting scheme; others served to provide a context in which to generalize about some of our findings (and some were simply a blowing off of steam at the end of the long day!).

Mrs. J., exercising all these qualities, has made Los Altos her own, but it is a small district and she has been in charge for more than two decades. Children in her extended day program have the unheard-of option of inviting friends to play with them at the center after school -- to be at home away from home. Such flexibility is possible only in relatively small centers; knowing this and being in charge, Mrs. J. keeps Los Altos Children's Centers small.

At Hill Street Center Mrs. S. has also created excellence, but on a more limited scale against greater odds. Responsible for only one center in a medium-sized district, and a district which has conscientiously supported its Children's Centers, she struggles against factors which are beyond her control, since they reflect the district's need to balance enrollment and the state's policy in determining financial support. Her commitment and skills are unquestionable, but her stamina may be wearing thin.

Public day care in California has offered stability in programs for young children, in spite of its many years of uncertain status. Moreover, it has contributed immeasurably to professional leadership in the field, since Children's Centers supervisors have held almost the only positions (apart from those in colleges and universities with programs for teacher training in early childhood education) with sufficient stability and rewards in salary and status to attract and hold highly qualified professional educators 37/. The Children's Center program exemplifies both the advantages and risks in locating responsibility for group programs for young children within a bureaucratic framework.

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37 "An embryonic profession can be generated only on the basis of favorable work conditions. There must be a corps of full time workers who are engaged in similar types of work and who are interested in their work as a permanent commitment. There must also be some degree of autonomy and a sense of performing a distinctive and valued activity" (Clark, 1958).

The California Committee on Early Childhood, an ad hoc group formed in the early 1960's to work toward better programs for young children and intended to be representative of concerned leadership in the field, drew its membership almost entirely from these two sources, universities and Children's Center administrators.

CHAPTER V

PROPRIETARY NURSERY SCHOOLS: PROGRAM ORIENTATION

There is considerable variety in the types of orientation found in privately-owned preschools in California. Some offer primarily custodial services to working mothers who ask only that their children be given good physical care. At the opposite pole are those schools which consider themselves to be part of an educational elite. In these schools there is a strong emphasis on the acquisition of academic skills and the discipline required to achieve them. The high degree of concentration on academic content is attractive to parents who want their children equipped to enter a highly competitive, technologically-oriented society in which, they feel, early training is a necessity.

Still other facilities -- the majority, perhaps -- fall on a continuum somewhere between these two poles. A rare few are successful in achieving a type of environment in which young children can grow and develop in all areas -- physical, social, emotional and intellectual -- without sacrificing one for the other. The sample schools chosen for this study illustrate several types of distinctive competence in early childhood education. Because the definition of excellence in this field is still a matter open to debate, the reader must make his own judgments about the respective merits of the programs described.

The Large Chain Operation: The Case of Fair Oaks Nursery School, Well-spring of the Elite

The majority of child care facilities under private sponsorship in California are small establishments located at one site in the community. Unlike public child care centers they tend to be independent, self-contained units varying greatly in physical setting, characteristics of personnel, and type of program. Of the thirty proprietary centers visited in our original study only six had sixty or more children enrolled. As noted earlier, small size and private sponsorship are nearly synonymous.

We found size of center to have considerable relevance to such organizational characteristics as program, type of clientele, variety of services offered, and authority vested in the director. Both small and large size carry with them particular advantages and disadvantages, which we will examine at length in the ensuing narrative. Because the growing demand for group child care services may result in the proliferation of privately owned facilities for increasingly larger numbers of children at more than one site, we have selected one of these programs for examination.

Fair Oaks Nursery School is a large school which appears to have been eminently successful in avoiding many of the pitfalls which menace the private entrepreneur. At Fair Oaks the conflict between desire for professional orientation (as reflected in teacher qualifications) and the need for economic survival (as reflected in such concrete realities as teacher salaries) which the private nursery owner often faces has been avoided. As an example of organizational adaptation to environmental conditions which is both highly responsive to socio-economic determinants in the community and yet self-determined with respect to institutional goals and standards, Fair Oaks provides some interesting insights into the effects of organizational decision-making on type and quality of services offered.

Fair Oaks Nursery School is the lower division of a private co-educational preparatory school 1/ which, in physical setting and in ideological orientation, resembles nothing so much as the Eastern "prep" school transplanted into the ruggedly individualistic climate of the Far West. The first in a series of schools to be established by the director, Fair Oaks School presently has an enrollment of 800 children through grade six, with 150 in the nursery school. The latter represents a downward extension, in both theory and practice, of the educational principles of the traditional elementary curriculum in America: training in academic skills and discipline and acculturation to an adult-dominated society. In addition, however, it proclaims a higher goal: academic excellence. As an elite school its values shape its policies and structure in a highly specialized way. Because of a combination of factors, representing both a response to and control of the environment, Fair Oaks together with its sibling schools has become a stable, efficient organization of considerable value to the community, providing an ever-widening array of services to an equally expanding population. In order to present a clear picture of Fair Oaks -- the program it offers, the population it serves, the ends it seeks and the means by which it achieves them -- we have drawn upon our observational analysis of teacher-child interaction and staff interviews, conducted during our visit three years ago, and our interview conducted with the director during the course of the present study. What we found, we present here as an example of unique organizational adaptation 2/.

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[1] The chain of private schools of which Fair Oaks is a part includes a combined elementary and secondary school as well as several elementary schools which serve as additional "feeders" for the high school program.

[2] One of the assumptions of this study is that while all children have a number of universal needs, certain groups of children require specialized programs. As one director put it simply, "different children have different needs". It is for the reader to determine what is "good" -- and what is not -- for the particular group or groups of children with whom he may be working.

Fair Oaks Nursery School is located, together with the other buildings which make up the Fair Oaks educational complex, on several acres of tree-studded land in the semi-rural atmosphere of a community on the outskirts of Los Angeles. Situated in a residential area, isolated from city noise and confusion, it is nevertheless not far from one of the branches of the network of Los Angeles freeways. It is thus easily accessible to families, a prime requisite for group care facilities. There are few parcels of vacant land of comparable size left within Los Angeles County; those which remain are priced out of the market for private educational facilities and await industrial and high-income multiple-housing development. Because the owner, who is also director of the school, saw the need for such a facility several decades ago, he was able to purchase the then inexpensive land in a quantity large enough for future expansion.

On our initial visit to Fair Oaks, we were introduced to those teachers of the staff of nine -- eight full-time and one part-time -- whom we would observe. (In addition, a registered nurse who serves the entire school is always on duty). We were informed that the nursery school was divided into two sections -- the Junior and Senior Departments [3]. In the former group were placed the 2's and 3's, in the latter the 3½'s and 4's. A strict grouping policy is adhered to according to age and (in the upper divisions) ability. The groups were physically separated as well, being housed in separate compounds divided by a quiet residential street; the buildings they occupied differed in both architectural style and function. The program of the 2's and 3's fit the comparative casualness and warmth of the old ranch house which they used, in contrast to the more business-like surroundings to which they would graduate when they entered the senior nursery (which housed, in addition, the 4 and 5 year olds' pre-kindergarten group).

Although program in both departments was structured, it was less so for the very young children. Story-telling and coloring, toileting and outdoor play for the 2's proceeded with somewhat less precision and less concentrated singleness of purpose than in the older groups. The play area of the 2's with its grassy yard surrounded by a rustic wall contrasted with the dirt and sand-covered play yard of the older children which is adjacent to the playground of the elementary level and is stocked with the standard equipment of swings, slides and wheel toys, but little else. The activity in either yard was well-regulated under the constant vigilance of the teachers; the children, like diligent employees on their coffee break, were intent on renewing their energies through outdoor play for the serious work at hand when they re-entered the class rooms.

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[3] The significant of these designations for future roles struck us as being worthy of note.

Indoors, the program in the senior nursery emphasized the learning of a number of specific intellectual and social skills; goals in the junior nursery included coordination of visual and motor skills, learning of routines, and adjustment to group activities. Our observations of teacher-child interaction indicated a high percentage of lessons taught in comparison with the other nurseries we visited. In other words, the teachers expended considerable time and effort in communicating or attempting to communicate specific concepts and desired behaviors to the children. The focus was clearly, in the words of the director, on the goals of preparing children to be "socially adjusted and academically ready to go on (in school). . ." There was, moreover, a high degree of consistency between the role definition of the director and teachers, as stated in their interviews, and actual teacher performance, as observed in daily interaction with the children. Primary emphasis was on teaching children the rules of social living, the 'do's' and 'don'ts' of functioning in the group context. Lessons on control and restraint of one's own behavior were frequent; as the director noted in the subsequent interview, obedience is considered an important part of educational training at Fair Oaks: "Our rules are firmly set. Children should listen to the teacher -- they must develop this early since those in our upper grades are expected to obey instantly". Equally stressed is academic training. Intellectual skills such as counting numbers, recitation of the alphabet, and eye-hand coordination such as writing numbers and coloring are combined with development of knowledge and awareness through the imparting of factual information in a highly structured teacher-directed format. This method is heavily relied upon in the pre-kindergarten classes for instruction in science and similar areas of curriculum. The amount of teacher-initiated behavior, therefore, is extremely high and is directed primarily at the entire group rather than at individual children. Similarly, teacher activity intended to promote verbal skills on the part of the children occurs with a high rate of frequency. Like a skilled and demanding maestro in front of his orchestra the teacher constantly commands, guides, entreats and rebuffs in her effort to bring about a concerted and brilliant production. "We are", the director observed with pride, "an accelerated school".

The concentrated attention given to educational preparedness is part of a deliberate policy to build an elite student body for the secondary school. The director notes that the school does not screen children out at the nursery level but "by the seventh grade we accept only the best. A child from our school must be invited to go beyond the sixth grade. Generally it's a sure thing for those in the college prep class, but others are carefully screened, particularly those from other schools".

The director is at pains to make it clear, however, that the high degree of selectivity is academically, not socially, oriented. "Parents send children here for education, nothing else". When families are clearly seeking a prestige school, they are referred to one of the socially-conscious status schools of which there are a number in the area. Relating an anecdote concerning an irate father who complained that after he had paid the money all he had to show for it were his seventh grade son's failing grades, the director of the school underscored his refusal to compromise his standards: "Parents can't buy grades here. I explained to the man that he had merely paid for the opportunity". Institutional integrity of this nature has been assured by early determination of character-shaping goals and an unswerving commitment to them.

The value system under which Fair Oaks Nursery School operates is clear; school readiness, to a degree of excellence, is the goal toward which all organizational activity leads. What factors have determined this preoccupation? To provide an answer to this question the school's evolution must be analyzed.

The Growth of an Empire

The Physical Setting

Of the many areas in Los Angeles County which experienced phenomenal population growth between 1950 and 1960, the San Fernando Valley led the field. Population which had tripled in the 40's doubled again in the 50's to show an increase in the last decade of a mind-boggling 134.7%, spectacular even in a part of the country noted for its cinemascopic, bigger-than-life style 4/. The valley in 1960 was more populous than all but 27 entire cities in the United States. Statistics indicate more than two-thirds of the valley residents changed their place of residence between 1950 and 1960 and joined the "boomer" rush to the area. The greatest invasion occurred in the outlying portions of the valley, which ballooned with the influx of thousands of young, stable families with a high percentage of young children.

In general, the families of the valley represent a youthful elite -- a young white professional and executive middle class which has "made it", socio-economically speaking, typically through educational and occupational attainment rather than inherited wealth or prestige. For the most part these families, particularly in the new outlying communities, are upwardly mobile. They are, to a large degree, future- and success-oriented, anxious for their children to be likewise. Believers in sound educational (i.e., academic) preparation as a key to occupational (if not social) status, they eagerly, and early, entrust their children to professionals with whose norms and goals they can identify. What such parents want for their children is not a substitute child-rearing environment to provide appropriate developmental experiences and compensate for possible deficiencies in the home, often the prime need in disadvantaged areas, but a group experience which reinforces a climate already present in the home environment. It is

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[4] Meeker, Marcia and Harris, Joan. Background for Planning. Welfare Planning Council, Los Angeles Region, (mimeo), 1964.

less the need for physical care outside of the home -- although this is a requirement for those mothers who work -- than a parental conviction that only through a structured group environment can their children be prepared for the roles they will assume as adult members of society.

It was into this community setting that Mr. E., the owner and director of Fair Oaks, introduced the school, his first in a now burgeoning empire of educational enterprises, in 1951. Mr. E. himself, a remarkable occupational mutation blending the characteristics of traditional prep-school head master and modern corporate executive, had come to California during the population explosion in the 1940's at a time of accelerated demand for workers in war industries. At the end of the decade a newly prosperous middle class had arisen in an economy flourishing from roots put down in the war years. Mr. E., with his professional experience and business acumen, was quick to perceive the need which had arisen for educational services. Possessing a master's degree from a mid-western university and having taught in both elementary and secondary schools, Mr. E. had a strong personal commitment to the need for training in academic skills, which he (along with a number of parents) perceived to be sorely lacking in the public schools. His experience as a teacher as well as with his own children led him to attempt to correct the deficiency by buying the property on which Fair Oaks now stands and opening a small kindergarten and elementary school extending through sixth grade. From a beginning enrollment of 19, Fair Oaks has grown to its present size of 800 students. Growth, both in human components and in physical plant, has presented few problems due primarily to far-signted planning on the part of the director; nevertheless there have been unanticipated consequences which have somewhat altered the direction of Fair Oaks' program. Because he had early envisioned the potential need for expansion, Mr. E. originally purchased sufficient land, at a time when land values were not prohibitively high in the area, to enlarge facilities in order to accommodate larger numbers of children in an increasingly diversified program. During the second year a high school was added as planned, but discontinued the following year when Mr. E. found the selectivity of student body he sought was not possible without accreditation 5/.

Mr. E's original intent had not included plans for a nursery school ("It's not my field, but over the years, I've learned a lot about it"). He soon introduced one, however, in response to the urging of parents whose older children attended the school and who liked the idea of a central location to which they could transport all their children together. This move necessitated the hiring of a nursery school supervisor who assists in the correlation of curriculum under thd direction of Mr. E.,

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[5] Mr. E. pointed out that one cannot build a reputation for excellence -- particularly academic excellence -- without screening applicants and refusing to accept those who do not meet the standards of the school.

Mr. E., like many proprietary owners and directors, emphasizes that his program is a nursery school. "We are not", he notes emphatically, "a child care center. I refer people elsewhere who want child care". This statement should not blind the reader to the fact that Fair Oaks does offer full-day care to a good many of the children enrolled in both its nursery and elementary departments. Provision of this care enables the children of working mothers to attend the school -- an important consideration for the families in Fair Oaks' clientele, in which many mothers work in order to be able to afford to send their children to private school. Family educational objectives thus determine financial need, rather than vice versa.

The concentration on reputation for academic excellence has had its rewards, possibly beyond even the well-calculated plans of the director. As successive waves of population flowed into the outlying newly-settled portions of the valley, additional schools in the chain began to appear, all with canny precision, in the midst of comparatively affluent educationally-oriented families with young children. Fair Oaks, as the director notes, advertises "not at all". News of the school was spread quickly by word of mouth, and new facilities filled up to capacity almost before the paint was dry. Members of Mr. E's family became partners in the construction and direction of new branches, thus retaining control of the operation, and client services were rapidly added to accommodate the expanding population -- bus service, extended day supervision, ranch facilities for riding, boarding schools, and whenever possible an educational complex extending from pre-school to high school. There are now six schools, of which several have an enrollment of 500 to 800, in the chain; the most recent facility is due to open, predictably, in the newest outcropping of "prestige" homes in the by now vastly expanded complex of valley communities 6/. Its site was purchased many years ago before real estate values had become inflated, and the physical plant has been constructed according to the needs of the institution. Among these, not the least is beauty of the grounds and buildings, a feature to which the director alluded with much pride 7/.

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[6] Population growth and movement are studied by Mr. E. with the same care as an investor following the Wall Street Journal; the decision on where to locate the schools must be based, he notes, on an accurate analysis of "where young people are moving".

[7] Because buildings can project a concrete visible image of excellence which such esoteric (to the non-professional) qualities as teacher qualification cannot, condition of the physical plant is often a foremost consideration for private schools. The need for attractive facilities tends to drive owners of private schools to seek new quarters as much, perhaps, as the need for adequate space; because many parents consider it important, it becomes a strong environmental pressure.

In contrast to the economic cloud under which many proprietary schools tend to live, the success of this chain of schools, which has faithfully followed demographic trends, has made it financially feasible to achieve high quality in program and personnel characteristics as well as in physical setting.

Mr. E. sees the choosing of qualified personnel under his direction as his most important job in supervising the schools: "A school", he points out in his typically unequivocal manner, "is only as good as its staff". Next to working on curriculum, the selection and supervision of teaching staff takes the major part of Mr. E's time. He evaluates job performance carefully; if it does not meet his standards, he does not hesitate to replace teachers. Those whom he finds satisfactory he rewards with raises based on continued attendance at college classes. When he feels that additional course work would be beneficial, he pays the tuition, and all teachers are required to attend a workshop a month. Because of his own professional orientation (Mr. E. describes himself as an educator, first and foremost) he believes that teaching on any level requires formal training -- a minimum of two years of college -- and points out that, from the beginning, he has hired well-trained people.

A common lament of private school owners is the high cost of qualified teachers. The financial autonomy of Fair Oaks and its allied schools, which its phenomenal success as a business venture has made possible, allows the director to make his own terms in the educational market-place. While acknowledging that teachers' salaries are indeed the greatest financial pressure which his schools experience, he notes that he pays teachers whatever he can get them for, and when he finds an individual he particularly wants he pays whatever is necessary -- sometimes, he notes, 'too much' [8]. He is thus able to compete successfully for staff with other programs, including the public Children's Centers and Federal programs such as Head Start in which pay scales are well above the average for proprietary and non-profit facilities. The director notes with satisfaction that he pays "about the top level of salaries among successful private schools", a wage which can vary from $5000 to $12,000. (It is assumed that the upper figure is limited to principals, generally at the high school level). Paid on a ten month basis, teachers receive no retirement benefits.

While the clientele from which Fair Oaks draws is for the most part a socio-economically privileged one, it nevertheless is fairly typical of the communities in which the schools are located and which they serve. Our interviewer notes:

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[8] The economic pressure which such an organization exerts on other less affluent facilities in the business does not escape their notice. Other smaller, financially less well-off centers tend, however, to heap the bulk of the blame for creating teacher-salary crises upon the public school system and Federal programs such as Head Start.

> ". . . The director has an extremely clear notion of what constitutes an academic elite and clearly distinguishes it from the social elite which he feels characterizes some other schools. He is convinced of his ability to offer a worthwhile, excellent community service and does some things (extended day care at below-cost level, for example) which he sees as deliberate non- financial choices to make the services available to people who need it. He clearly likes and believes in what he is doing".

Educational-Business Leadership: A Profitable Combination

The high degree of autonomy which the director of Fair Oaks enjoys is the result of a number of interdependent personal and environmental characteristics: many years of experience, total dedication to unwavering standards, a socially and economically fertile climate, innate administrative ability, and, undoubtedly, a liberal supply of luck which just happened to put him in the right place at the right time. Moreover, Mr. E. appears to possess the instincts and abilities for creative leadership, a combination of commitment, understanding, and determination, which Selznick defines as "a strategy of change that looks to the attainment of new capabilities more nearly fulfilling the truly felt needs and aspirations of the institution" (Selznick, 1957). The director saw, very early and very clearly, some potential needs of the community:

> "There is a great demand for good private schools -- the public ones are terribly overcrowded. One out of five students in Los Angeles County attends private or parochial school. There must be a real need for this -- (but) some parents think private school is good just because it is private -- this is terrible. . ."

He was realistic about the needs of the institution as well:

> "For a satisfactory business, a school needs to be a reasonable size. We couldn't operate with fewer than 100 children in the nursery school and 100 in the kindergarten".

He knew, in brief, how to achieve an organization responsive to its environment while maintaining its own integrity. Years of experience and a natural ability to "psych out" the situation -- a type of educational "moxie" -- have enabled Mr. E. to become an undisputed leader in the proprietary nursery school field in the Los Angeles area.

As a result of independence from environmental pressures due to its attachment to the larger organization, Fair Oaks Nursery School has succeeded in achieving a form of institutional security and identity possessed by few other nursery schools. The Department of Social Welfare no longer subjects it to intense scrutiny, having established to its satisfaction that standards at Mr. E's schools are high and they need no "policing". Channels of information have been long established; a vast network of professional, business, and no doubt, political contacts gives the director considerable discretionary power to act when and in what manner he deems necessary. He no longer needs for identity and security the support of the Pre School Association of California, in which he has been active as an office holder and supporter of legislation favorable to privately owned nursery schools, and he derives no professional value from it since it is essentially a business-oriented mutual benefit organization. (Of the Pre School Association, one director noted: "They are not an eager group educationally -- some people don't want that in nursery school"). The director no longer finds it necessary to turn to anyone for advice; all decisions regarding administration and curriculum are made by him. (He notes, however, that the licensing workers have been "very helpful"). Relieved of external constraints, the school is free to pursue a firm set of inner-directed goals; at the same time it is because of these goals that an apparently unending source of clients is made available, which in turn provides the physical foundation without which the educational super-structure would collapse.

What implications do these factors have for the type of group care setting provided for the children? While the climate of Fair Oaks Nursery School would be labeled, on the basis of our criteria in the original study, "cold" and "authoritarian", there may be a number of positive attributes to the environment it offers. On the one hand it is highly adult-centered, with arbitrary expectations for conformity: obedience itself is visualized as important with the emphasis on enforcement rather than on re-examination. There is a clear imperative to the children both to observe models of decision-making (i.e., staff) and to defer their emulation until adulthood, when they will have their turn to be in control. Affection-giving on the part of the teacher and initiative-taking on the part of the child are either discouraged or not actively encouraged. For children who need first to have warmth, ego-support and identity of self as individuals, and then need to learn to become self-reliant and self-directed, who need a warm lap to sit on before they can understand the words to tell about surroundings, such a program would be irrelevant, even destructive. For the child who has received these things from his home environment, however, the needs may be different. The authoritarian approach has the advantage, for child-rearing in a stable society or sub-culture, of clearly letting children know where they are, who they are to become, and how to get there.

Authoritarian schools work to create and maintain elites -- religious, social, academic, or whatever. The rules for behavior are clear and are required of members of the elite to distinguish them from non-members.

Non-conformity in behavior is punished, but ordinarily feelings are left alone 9/. It is generally assumed that conforming behavior has a good chance of eventuating in appropriate feelings. The authoritarian approach is ethnocentric -- it is clear what is good (our way) and what is bad (other ways): "At Fair Oaks we do it this way", the director pointed out to two boys he was disciplining. It seems to us entirely legitimate, in a heterogeneous society, that some private schools should seek to maintain elites -- and those which are competently meeting these goals be recognized. We also feel it is important to make their functioning clear.

The Question of Size: Large vs. Small

One of the questions which we implied at the beginning of our discussion was, is there an optimum size for nursery schools? If so, what is it? Such a query leads to a consideration of what happens in a large facility, that is, one having over 60 children in daily attendance. Can individual needs be met in a large organization? Fair Oaks Nursery School possesses the largest enrollment in our sample. What occurs there may be unusual for large schools, due to a number of factors which we have already noted; in other ways, it appears to be typical of such facilities.

Fair Oaks differs from other large facilities in the clientele which it serves, in the clarity of its philosophy, and in the agreement of all concerned on a curriculum designed to foster mastery of specific intellectual skills. It resembles other large facilities in the restricted environment which it offers to children. Because it is impossible to deal with mixed age groups 10/ in large numbers, those at Fair Oaks are segregated in separate yards. This arrangement, according to Mr. E., alleviates any feeling of overcrowding. Opportunities to experiment, either with a diversity of human relationships or with the variety found in the physical world, are exceedingly limited. Such experiences, unless they are available at homes, may be missed entirely by children who attend Fair Oaks.

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[9] The rebel who keeps his mouth shut and goes through the motions will survive -- generally with strong motivation and a clear sense of the nature and identity of his adversary. To this extent he has an advantage over the would-be rebel in a non-authoritarian system which doesn't meet his particular needs; he knows it isn't working for him, but he can't pin it down.

[10] Data from our earlier study indicated that wide-age grouping, when competently handled, can greatly enhance learning experiences for children.

While little teacher behavior at Fair Oaks is devoted to meeting children's physical needs, it must be remembered that the physical requirements of these children are usually well met at home. Emotional needs of the children require considerable sublimation in such a program 11/. The heavy emphasis on intellectual attainment and rules of social living leaves little opportunity for the casual exploration of self. The climate tends to be impersonal, disciplined, rational, highly predictable -- in short, an excellent training ground for participation in an urban, bureaucratic society. Assuming acceptance of the value system which underlies the type of experiences provided, and always keeping in mind the population it serves, one may conclude that Fair Oaks provides a very stable and supportive environment for children.

One of the greatest values of the large educational complex in which many grade and age levels are combined on one site is, according to Mr. E., the continuity of program made possible by such an arrangement. In response to the question: "What do you consider the ideal size for a school?" he replied:

> "An enrollment of 800, nursery school through high school. In this combination the children become better prepared for first grade. Even those from my own separate nursery school and kindergartens who have the same program are less well prepared than those who attend the combination schools at which teachers and children both get more feel for the continuity of the whole thing. Teachers can meet with teachers of the next grade, children attend school assemblies, etc".

The director's opinion reflects a growing trend in the thinking of many educators in both the public and private sectors, who see as an important goal the establishment of continuity in experiences provided for children from the very early years through what are presently labeled the elementary grades.

With continuity of school experience, rather than intimacy of personal experience, as the purpose of the nursery, its size must be viewed in relation to its total school setting. While the nursery itself is large, the school of which it is a part is small in comparison to the huge public elementary, junior and senior high schools which characterize the valley. Its moderate size and its administrative structure enable

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[11] As we observed, the children's responses to activities at Fair Oaks were, on the average, neutral. Reaction ranged from periods of high interest and involvement, seen particularly during such activities as rhythmic movement to music, to periods of restlessness or boredom, most often observed during such structured abstract routines as tracing numbers.

it to offer an important continuity in philosophy , curriculum, and interpersonal relationships. At the same time, its place within a chain of private schools gives it the economic advantages that go with large size.

There is considerable evidence that the size of the operation has in some ways contributed greatly to its ability not only to survive in the environment, but to achieve quality that other smaller schools find difficult to manage. Because of the large enrollment, it is financially possible to secure professionally qualified staff, to finance in-service training in other institutions, to maintain and expand physical facilities, and to keep tuition levels where families who need the services can afford them 12/. It is essential for private schools such as Fair Oaks to attract parents. For this reason, visible features of program such as buildings and grounds are important. Outdoor space, therefore, is an important commodity at Fair Oaks, primarily for its aesthetic appeal to adults 13/. In addition, human resources are an important factor for the type of program Fair Oaks offers. It is essential that the staff be highly qualified. The director has recognized this need from the beginning. The school chain employs 300 persons and Mr. E. personally oversees the hiring and firing and performance of each one. Although the operation is complex and demands a great deal of administrative skill, it provides economic leverage for implementing decisions not available to smaller schools which often, notes Mr. E., have a "hard time making a go of it" on parent fees alone.

The case of Fair Oaks would appear to emphasize the value of careful attention to choice of long-range goals and the realization that while elegant surroundings may tend to enhance the image and thus the financial status of an establishment, it is the goals and standards of the human part of the system, the orientation and training of personnel, that become the crucial factor. One of the most relevant aspects of Fair Oaks' organizational structure may be the fact that Mr. E is both

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[12] Tuition at Fair Oaks Nursery School is comparable to that of most proprietary centers.

[13] Fair Oaks is not distinguished by the imaginative use of outdoor space to support daily program for children. There is plenty of space, enabling it to be used as is without the need for ingenious arrangement of equipment. More important, in the Fair Oaks curriculum it is indoors where the valid action takes place.

owner and director, and that he is a man possessing strong leadership qualities who maintains firm and direct control over policies, both in their conception and implementation. His professional orientation and experience have led him to follow a definition of role which stresses his obligation to provide professional leadership, particularly to his teachers 14/. Where the administrator can control the environment and provide himself at the outset of the effort with the tools he himself has determined as necessary to accomplish the task, the outcome is more likely to be "a challenging educational enterprise".

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[14] "Whether the school becomes a dull and dreary place or a challenging educational enterprise for children depends not so much upon what is there at the outset as upon the quality of leadership (the administrator) provides for his staff" (Gross and Herriott, 1965).

CHAPTER VI

PROPRIETARY NURSERIES (continued)

A. Happy Hours, a Creative "Back Yard" School

> "One of these schools in every neighborhood and you would have the day care situation licked".
>
> -- Observer's Field Notes

Located but a short distance away from Fair Oaks in the same community is another privately-owned nursery school. Happy Hours -- as we shall call it for the purposes of this study -- is significantly dissimilar. While Fair Oaks was designed to serve specific requirements of one segment of the population, Happy Hours sought from the beginning to serve a less socio-economically advantaged, less academically-oriented group. Nearly one-half of the children who attend Happy Hours come from one-parent families, and nearly all have working mothers. The needs of both the parents and the children who come to Happy Hours are far different from those who come to Fair Oaks. Where the latter is adult-centered, Happy Hours is primarily child-oriented; emphasis is not placed primarily on intellectual attainment, but on creation of a warm, supportive child-rearing environment, one which the parent may not be able to wholly provide.

The first view of Happy Hours is of a gray two-story house, in all likelihood at one time the residence of a prosperous California rancher. The yard on one side is somewhat concealed by shrubs and shade trees; on the other a low white fence extends mid-way to a large portico at the side of the house where the drive ends. Behind the fence one can easily see (and be seen by) a number of children engrossed in play. Attention is immediately drawn to a number of unusual objects: an almost life-size wooden hobby horse, with rope tail and ears; a truly life-size metal sculpture of a figure holding a guitar (the creator's "protest to the hippies", we later learned), a fort built in a tree, large and sturdy enough for several occupants at once; and a number of make-believe stationary vehicles with moveable parts which gave free play to young imaginations and muscles. The children, many of whom appeared very young, moved freely from one play-yard to another; the atmosphere was calm and free from chaos in spite of the number of children -- thirty or forty -- and their intense interest in their play.

Indoors we found activities were more or less non-directed; teachers were conspicuous by their absence except as they talked with individual children about their projects -- finger painting, building with Lego blocks, and so forth. Again the children were ungrouped and moved about much at their own will, but the noise and confusion often found indoors in group care facilities was absent. In the music room, a converted garage where twenty or so children gathered for rhythms and singing, we anticipated disaster -- could one adult control such a large group of mixed ages? Not only did the question of control never become an eventuality, the children actually were enthralled with the activity. We stayed to observe during the luncheon period, which can be a nerve-wracking or, at best, tedious experience. Heralded by an aroma which only served to sharpen our own hunger pangs, lunch at Happy Hours was a highly atypical occurrence. Here children were encouraged to speak at the table. In spite of conversations between staff and children, which avoided the all-too frequent "finish your beans -- don't poke Hank" format, the food disappeared rapidly, and children drifted away from the table, one by one, to settle down for naps.

Perhaps the most delightful of all was the appearance of the owners. Man and wife, they worked together with the children as a team; he was young and vigorous, with a gentle but firm manner ("You must command obedience, not demand it", we were informed during our interview with Mr. Z.), while she -- disarmingly attractive in a rather 'mod' way -- was equally young and buoyant. Straightforward and willing to spend precious minutes to talk with us, she never brushed aside a child who came to her for help, as we sat in the warmth of the California winter sun. Could it always be this smooth, this calm and comfortable? Quite possibly not, but young children are actors not easily rehearsed, and given to embarassing impromptu performances.

One of the most distinctive aspects of the school, as these observations indicate, is the fact that there are not one but two owner-directors, husband and wife, both of whom are actively and continuously engaged throughout the day in working with the children in the program. For young children, particularly boys who have been deprived of a father-image in the home, we felt the continuing presence of a male figure who can provide support and guidance in the necessary proportions to be of great value. This is a phenomenon rarely seen in a field where lack of positive masculine image and adequate financial remuneration combine to discourage young men from entering.

Physical Setting

The community in which Happy Hours was begun as a preschool in 1955, four years after Fair Oaks was established, was one of the early suburbs of Los Angeles. First settled by cattle ranchers and citrus growers, it later grew into a stable, middle class residential 'bedroom' community from which many residents commuted on the nearby freeways to jobs in neighboring cities. In spite of population growth and the addition of duplexes to the original single-family dwellings, population density remained low in the 50's. Nevertheless, it was becoming clear that the need for group child care was a very real and rapidly growing one, as social mores changed and more and more mothers went to work.

One individual who saw the possibility of fulfilling her own needs and those of the community at the same time was the present owner's mother. Alone and with a family to support, she found that the idea of starting a nursery school in her own home had great appeal 1/. Purchase of the big house, in which she could live upstairs, and the surrounding property, a necessity since she did not want 'just five or ten children', was not the impossible dream it would be today. Inflation of land values had not yet spiralled to their present heights and acquisition of real estate for such purposes involved less initial outlay of capital. Mrs. Z. Sr. had no experience or special training for running a preschool program, like many women who enter the business as a means of supplementing income, but she did have, according to her daughter-in-law ". . . a humorous quality. She works well with children and she's very creative. My husband is a lot like her. . ." With little more than a love for children and an old house which might have created a permanent headache for a less innovative individual, Mrs. Z. Sr. established her nursery school.

The present owners, Mrs. Z's son and daughter-in-law, purchased the old house from a woman who had bought it from Mrs. Z. Sr. six months previously. This woman's attempt to operate a nursery school ended in dismal failure and the property, by that time run down, was available at a "decent" price because of its deteriorated condition. Its central location was ideal; the neighborhood was quiet and pleasant, while the property was on a well-traveled yet uncongested street near a freeway entrance and near industry. "Convenience", note the present owners, "is essential to the survival of a group care facility".

The neighborhood and surrounding community have not overtly changed a great deal in the last ten or fifteen years but changing family structures have generated new needs, creating an even greater demand for the services Happy Hours offers. There appear to be more young children in the area now, due (the owners feel) not to the birth rate, which is in fact declining, but to in-migration, while a rising divorce rate has increased the demand for day care. Ethnically, the community remains predominantly white. At the time of the 1960 census, there was no non-white population but some Negro families have since moved into the area. The owner's wife commented upon the fears which this eventuality has generated in the white community and her own strategies in coping with such feelings:

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[1] She had rented property to the director of Fair Oaks who successfully launched his first school and then purchased the property. From this contact developed the idea of starting her own nursery school.

"When the non-discriminatory law pertaining to child care went through a few years ago the private school association had a panic meeting. They were sure they were going to lose their business and all their parents. My husband and I had decided on the basis of principle, previous to that time, that we would not discriminate, although we had never had a Negro apply. We invited a Department of Social Welfare worker to lecture to the association on the subject. She told them the key is to prepare the parents you already have, that this will be a good experience for the children and the quality of learning will be maintained. There was a lot of unrest in the group for the next couple of years. A few Negro families made test cases but there was no real problem. Two years later they had another meeting. I had my little speech all prepared; I had debated on the 'pro' side (i.e., in favor of anti-discriminatory practices) before. This time only two people were against it; the group realized this wasn't a crisis. You've got to use common sense. We took the social worker's advice and prepared our parents. We realized we could have lost $500 a month, but now we wouldn't. We had the courage of our convictions. We can't let other people run our school".

As a result of the general population increase the school has been able to achieve greater financial stability. Enrollment had seasonal peaks and valleys until five years ago, when it began to maintain a steady level. In addition, the rapidly growing demand for services in the area has precluded competitive practices among schools. Instead there exists a symbiotic relationship similar to that between Fair Oaks and other prestige schools in the area, a mutual-benefit arrangement in which each school provides specialized services in some area of need and refers families to other schools when their needs are best served elsewhere. Mrs. Z. pointed out that they have no 'part-timers'; children are not accepted on less than a five-day-a-week basis: "They don't adjust well. I think we're the only school in the area that restricts enrollment in this way". The process of selectivity based on policy decisions operates at Happy Hours just as at Fair Oaks, but on the basis of differing goals and standards. Clientele is informally and effectively restricted at Happy Hours to working parents; such a policy enlarges the number of places open to such families and at the same time yields benefits to the school, whose program is not disrupted as in some facilities by an overly-complex schedule 2/. The cooperative system maintained between the private group care facilities thus benefits

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[2] Happy Hours does provide extended day care for brothers and sisters of the children who are enrolled. Mr. Z. himself provides their transporation to the elementary school.

the institution as well as the client.

Strategies in Implementing Goals

Happy Hours is a moderate size school with an enrollment of less than fifty children. This number, Mrs. Z. feels, is the optimum: "We often turn children away so that we won't get too big. You can't keep taking and taking children. We take what we feel we can handle" 3/. For the type of program they desire to offer -- activities designed to foster physical, social and emotional as well as cognitive growth in a home-like setting which is permissive rather than regimented -- the Z's feel (an opinion in direct contrast to that of the director of Fair Oaks) that only in a small school can they meet the needs of the parents who come to them. As at Fair Oaks, there is a long waiting list. Happy Hours is clearly fulfilling a strong need among that segment of the population which needs a supportive, often substitute, environment for child-rearing.

A number of the decisions which have shaped the school have been self-determined by Mr. and Mrs. Z. according to their own goals and values as described above. However, external circumstances have combined to influence some decisions. Happy Hours could not, because of its comparatively small enrollment, afford to hire teachers with the professional qualifications of those at a school such as Fair Oaks. Given the background of the owners and the needs of the clientele it is at the same time unlikely that they would choose to. Both Mr. and Mrs. Z. are graduates of public junior colleges, the one having majored in physical education, the other in nursing, and are thus well suited to overseeing the physical needs of the children. In addition they have the personal qualities of warmth, vitality, and humor which make them highly responsive to the social and emotional needs of the children. Their only previous experience had been with a Sunday school nursery, of which Mrs. Z. was the director. They talked about opening a school of their own for nearly a year after their marriage, because Mr. Z. had had an opportunity to observe the operation of a school at close hand, living with his mother upstairs above her school in the same house in which Happy Hours is now located, and because they both liked the atmosphere in working with young children. Notes Mrs. Z., "We just sort of fell into it".

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[3] For a model they have observed Mr. Z's mother, who has a large school and has warned them against the dangers of over-expansion. Her experience has caused them to be wary of a large-scale operation, which is highly demanding and places considerable pressures on an owner who also assumes the role of director.

At least three factors -- the highly pragmatic training which they have had, an intuitive sensitivity to children's and parents' needs, and a budget dependent solely upon parent fees and thus somewhat restrictive -- have made Mr. and Mrs. Z. seek teachers whose primary asset is their enjoyment of children.

> "Most teachers who come to us do enjoy children so that's automatic. We want someone who is presentable in appearance and younger than we are 4/. We have rejected several girls who had an A.A. degree in education. They had an attitude . . . well, they were all ready to run the school; they were all theory. We prefer experience, but in a way it's better to train teachers yourself. They need that special quality (i.e., ability to relate to children). Of course, it's important for them to continue to learn. I still go to school myself and so does our regular teacher".

Mrs. Z. reflects in her statements some of the rationale underlying private school owners' opposition to attempts to upgrade qualification requirements for teachers in licensed day nurseries(although she does not mention what for many owners is a crucial point, namely, the higher cost of employing better educated teachers). The debate over what makes a 'good' teacher of young children is yet to be resolved, but there are many directors (and professionals in early childhood education as well) who feel that extensive formal academic training unaccompanied by actual experience working with children may be no better than no training at all. The Z's echo the preference of many directors for conducting their own in-service training and drawing selectively on courses in local colleges and universities, plus a desire for some autonomy in selecting teachers who have 'that special quality' and can work well in a particular school setting 5/.

The teacher-hiring problem to which owners frequently refer is comparatively non-existent at Happy Hours, due in part to the fact that only one regular teacher besides Mr. and Mrs. Z. is required. (In addition, a part-time teacher's aide is employed). There is little teacher

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[4] The Z's comments implied that authority role relationships tend to be endangered when a young director must work with staff which is older. Where the relationship has a professional basis or the organization is larger, such problems may be less likely to occur.

[5] "It's better to train teachers yourself", notes Mrs. Z., "because the theory doesn't always fit the children. You must use common sense. After all, this is going to be a second home for the children; this is a 'back yard' nursery school. Both boys and girls need a father image".

turnover; when a new teacher is required there is always a ready supply, since Happy Hours has established a reputation as a pleasant and unpressured work environment. Because all three adults are deeply involved throughout the entire day's activities with the children and with one another, it is essential that the third staff member fit well into the group 6/. The Z's relationship with teachers is consequently informal: "It's got to be; it's impossible to remain aloof in a formal employer-employee relationship in a situation like this". Not only is working closely with staff dictated by necessity but by preference:

> "There should be at least some contact (between director and teachers) every day. We sit down and talk with teachers often; if they are doing things I prefer them not to do I let them know about it. I don't, for example, like teachers to chat with one another in the yard -- this detracts from the attention they should be giving children. Sometimes I ask their opinion, but it usually isn't necessary because my husband and I discuss things together. I often ask teachers to make their own decisions on matters concerning the children".

When problems arise which the Z's cannot solve by mutual discussion, they have a number of sources for consultation open to them. Active in the affairs of the Pre School Association of California, they receive help with administrative matters (as well as social benefit) from that group. There are apparently few questions, however, which cannot be answered by talking informally with Mr. Z's mother, who continues to operate her own school at another location. In the rare event when her experience and their 'common sense' fail them, they seek professional guidance from the Department of Social Welfare. Because licensing workers themselves vary widely in experience, training, and personality, all of which strongly condition their orientation and interpretation of licensing standards, the value of the Department as a source of help varies with the individual worker 7/. Occasionally, the Z's feel that they are better qualified than the licensing worker to make decisions as to the needs of the school. In one instance a consultant demanded that the yard for the two's be fenced because of a single child with special needs. Believing free circulation for all ages in the yard to be beneficial to

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[6] Mr. Z. functions in a multiplicity of roles serving as teacher, guide on field trips, chauffeur, handyman, cook and waiter, administrative assistant, and in a number of other capacities.

[7] The turnover in licensing consultants is high, due to a number of constraints operating on the Department of Social Welfare.

the children, the Z's nevertheless complied ("A 'suggestion' by your worker means you do it!") but the simultaneous departure of the worker (to another job) and the fence (to the woodpile) were hardly coincidence. Mrs. Z. does not feel the pressure and occasional hostility which some proprietary owners feel toward supervision by the Department of Social Welfare, however. In general, the relationship is a harmonious one, the Department having had the opportunity over a period of years to evaluate the program and develop respect for the Z's proven ability to develop and enforce their own standards. While some workers are difficult to deal with, notes Mrs. Z., "you can always work around it. You have to use common sense". Like the director of Fair Oaks the Z's have the courage of their convictions. Even more important to survival, perhaps, they have learned to 'psych out' licensing consultants to determine just how much leeway they will be permitted.

Environmental pressures for the Z's do not, therefore, come from the Department of Social Welfare, as they do for some directors, nor from financial constraints, although this was the case in the early years of the school before enrollment stabilized. The Z's are not primarily motivated by profit-making incentives. They do seek a decent living and apparently achieve it, but not at the expense of the parents or children: "Money is a big factor with too many people in the child-care business today". Because they have used their imagination and a considerable amount of physical energy, they have been able to achieve a creative environment for children which costs far less than if they had purchased equivalent goods and services; i.e., play equipment, maintenance, housekeeper, cook, etc. "It could easily be duplicated anywhere, with a little imagination", Mr. Z. points out. "Everything you do tends to make for a happier, more educational experience for young children. Of course, if you don't have the imagination, you shouldn't be working with kids. . ."

We visited Happy Hours in two successive years, and on our second visit we were struck by the degree to which the physical setting had been altered. We found entirely credible Mrs. Z's remark that they had made a "thousand changes -- nothing that is here now was here when we began". Because of Mr. Z's mechanical ability and innate creativity, they have been able to add equipment and improve the physical plant in a way which could be prohibitively expensive for a less enterprising owner. Indoors the old house, which had had an aura of old-fashioned charm and familial warmth but had become cramped due to its proliferation of small rooms (ameliorated by taking off all inside doors to increase the free flow of traffic), has been completely refurbished; wall-to-wall carpeting of a good commercial grade ("The most satisfactory type of floor covering for group care facilities", according to Mr. Z.) and fluorescent lighting have been installed in all the rooms. Outdoors, the creative abilities of Mr. Z. are everywhere in evidence. Nearly every piece of play equipment in the yard has been built by Mr. Z., whose appraisal, more accurate than immodest, is that it is by far superior, in both durability and stimulation of creative play, to standard commercially-produced equipment. In spite of the years of changes and improvements at Happy Hours, Mr. Z. envisions yet more. He would like an even bigger yard, with more shade, and direct vehicular access to the play area: "There's a definite need for every nursery school to have a way for a truck to get into the yard, to bring in sand and other materials". Although there is a driveway which extends to the gate and an alley, convenient for parents delivering children, immediately adjacent in the rear, Mr. Z. still considers this to be a major problem.

The pressures which the Z's do feel most strongly came quickly to the surface with reference to the alley, and the need for shade. Mr. Z. spoke with some bitterness of "municipal gamesmanship":

> "They (the city) said ' We'll give you a zoning variance [8] but you must pay for paving the alley'. We were asked to put up a $4,000 bond to have it paved. My sister knows a highly placed official in the municipal government of a neighboring community and he said this is typical legal blackmail. He made them change their demands for a bond. . . In order to pave the alley, the city forced us to take out a beautiful old shade tree. They didn't have to make the alley that wide. . . not that many people use it".

Mr. Z's comments point up a common problem of private child care facilities which are subject to the jurisdiction of local and state agencies (including municipal governments), whose regulations are developed to control widely different organizations. The functionaries of these agencies -- building and fire inspectors, sanitation engineers, etc. -- do not have knowledge of children's needs or autonomy to bend the rules (which indeed were set up with the express purpose of preventing subjective interpretation). Mrs. Z. tells with wry humor of the insistence of a fire inspector that a doorway be knocked out "because it was three-quarters of an inch too low. He said it was a fire hazard. If we had done that the whole wall would have collapsed. I told him we just don't have any children seven feet tall!" When the Z's complained to the chief inspector he revised the ruling, concurring that it was a 'ridiculous' demand.

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[8] Because Happy Hours is located in a residential zone, it must be granted a zoning variance to operate as a nursery school. "There are ten pages of thirty-two restrictions with which we must comply. For example, we're not supposed to take children out on the front lawn; the idea is not to disturb the residential atmosphere. But we do it occasionally. You have to use common sense; we don't let the children scream outdoors. . . they can do it in the music room".

Because they perceive a number of regulations to be unduly restrictive, often meaningless in terms of good child care, and because they have developed a network of personal contacts, both individual and group, through which they can learn of impending legislative action and exert pressure on regulatory agencies, the Z's can to some degree control the forces which are potential threats to institutional survival. That they are not entirely successful, certainly not to the degree of Fair Oaks, is illustrated by the alley-paving incident. By their innovative skill, however, they have suceeded in overcoming most of the obstacles which would have forced some private owners to admit defeat -- or compromise ideals.

Services to Children and Parents

Like Fair Oaks, Happy Hours demonstrates a type of distinctive competence in the services it provides for the population it seeks to serve. Program format, physical setting, and personnel practices have been designed to provide children with a home away from home. The refusal to take part-time applicants and the willingness to take very young children 9/ are a response to the needs of working mothers, for whom such facilities are scarce. The outdoor and indoor play areas have been set up to facilitate a comparatively unstructured program, responsive to child-initiated activities; the avoidance of rigid age-grouping contributes to this flexibility. Lack of artificial barriers encourages the exercise of responsible choice on the part of the children. As mentioned, the play area is an uninterrupted yard in which children are not restricted by age group; because of equipment which appeals to particular age levels, however, they tend to cluster in play groups. There is only a low picket fence to separate the children from the world beyond; the coming and going of parents, visitors, fire engines, and mailmen is clearly visible. Inside the yards, activity is constant, vigorous, but unchaotic and free from quarrels and collisions -- intentional or otherwise.

Such an effective environment, we felt, was not likely to be accidental. We asked Mr. Z. how the yards had evolved: "I've sat here and analyzed equipment for hours on end. Kids have to be taught how to use their imagination and play creatively". The vast array of equipment

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[9] One of the unique features of the school is the large percentage of two's, partly because Mrs. Z especially enjoys younger children. Other schools which prefer not to take children at such an early age refer parents who have need of this service to Happy Hours; in turn Happy Hours sends parents with older children to these schools: "It's a mutual benefit arrangement".

to which Mr. Z. continually adds is designed to stimulate a wide variety of imaginative and active play, in tree houses, complex units of boxes, ramps and ladders, and trains, trucks and cars large enough for imaginary journeys by child-size drivers and passengers. Children's interest in their activities was rated by our observers as consistently high; such sustained interest by very young children in group care is a rare and joyous happening. The outside play areas, in contrast to those at Fair Oaks, have received a great deal of thought partly because of the role they play in facilitating the children's experiences. They were carefully planned to be the main area of learning, not in an academic but in a pragmatic sense; learning by doing is the keynote at Happy Hours. Because enrollment is small, supervision is made easier and requires fewer verbal commands. The capacity of toileting facilities, originally determined by the building's function as a one-family residence, necessitates individualized use rather than institutional scheduling. The kitchen with its pleasant aromas is immediately adjacent to the dining room and provides a home-like setting in which to conduct parent conferences, which tend to be informal chats over a cup of coffee. The teachers are young, physically and mentally alert, sensitive to the children's needs, and consider love a viable product of group care. In response to her hopes for the children's experiences at Happy Hours, the teacher interviewed in our original study observed:

> "My greatest desire is that they can take something home [10] worth remembering, each day. I try to give them love and care without taking the role of the mother. To give them love is the important thing -- but the child must come to the teacher. It shouldn't be the teacher's need which is fulfilled, but the child's".

Our observations indicated a clear lack of "smothering"; teachers were encouraging with children, but their strongest emphasis was on the growth of independence and on competence in dealing with other children and respecting their feelings.

Recognition of parental needs is as much a part of the services Happy Hours provides as care of children. Unlike the parents of children who attend Fair Oaks, those who use Happy Hours are for the most part less well-educated and have achieved lower occupational levels; few have more than a high-school education and most are clerical workers. They tend to have more family problems, particularly financial, and are more apt to seek help with matters pertaining to child-rearing. Mr. and Mrs. Z. see as an integral part of their role as directors 11/ of the school, the understanding of parents and the ability to make not only a child but his family feel secure, a feeling which single parents often lack. The relationship with parents is close, although not in a social capacity. Because Mr. and Mrs. Z. live on the premises, they are always present when parents bring their children in the morning, and talk with them when they pick children up at night. The strongly supportive parent-owner relationship was illustrated by an incident concerning a child with severe medical problems which Mrs. Z., with her nurse's training, was able to detect. The mother could neither afford a doctor's fee nor manage transportation to one, so the Z's took the child to the doctor's office themselves, picked up prescriptions, and even helped with payments. Parents are encouraged to become actively involved in the children's activities, particularly for special events such as Christmas programs and birthday parties. At the school's request, one mother was asked to come in to tell the story of Chanukah 12/.

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[10] The teacher was clearly referring not to the daily paintings which parents often value as visible evidence of accomplishments, but something less tangible and perhaps infinitely more meaningful.

Not all parents seek or need such involvement; for those who do, it is an important service which the school feels it is essential to provide. For children and parents it supplies familial warmth; for the school, it provides help for a limited budget which cannot absorb costs for extra supplies or personnel. To the entire group it gives a sense of solidarity and belonging. The program at Happy Hours underscores the extra human benefits growing out of close, personal contact in a primary group, which cannot be measured in economic terms.

The program and setting at Happy Hours appear to represent a type of distinctive competence in caring for children which has considerable social value for children of one-parent families. While the population from which it draws clientele is middle class, its duplication in a ghetto environment could provide the ego-support, identity, and familial warmth which strongly cognitive-oriented programs often tend to lack. It is a program which can be implemented with a minimum of expensive physical equipment and plant, or highly qualified staff (in terms of formal training, which places restrictions on availability). The involvement of parents represents the recognition of a basic need, one

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[11] Mrs. Z. expressed the opinion that the title 'director' connoted the qualities of an administrative executive, which she did not consider her prime function; she much preferred some less formal term which would more accurately convey the image of a person concerned primarily with the children's needs.

[12] Notes Mrs. Z: "We don't like to get too involved in the area of religion; there are conflicting sensitivities on the part of parents".

which is being forcibly brought to the attention of the community in a number of school systems throughout the United States.

The strongest contribution, perhaps, of a group care facility like Happy Hours is its introduction into the predominantly matriarchal society of child care of a male in an authoritative yet ego-supportive role. We found men in most other group care settings to be confined, at best, to positions of formal non-involvement such as custodian, and, at worst, in positions of administrative authority where interaction with children was solely in a punitive rule-enforcing role. Occasionally the presence of a 'grandfatherly' maintenance man added an immeasurable quality of 'caring' to an otherwise dismal environment.

Through his active involvement with the children, Mr. Z. provides a strong yet sensitive masculine model -- a highly effective father-image -- with which they can identify and to which they can relate. For the boys, particularly, he supplies through his visible enactment of the roles of husband, worker, and friend a positive example for them to emulate. He clearly demonstrates that the quality of "maleness" is not synonymous with exercise of force; his belief that one must command obedience by personal example rather than demanding it by directives and punishment appears to be effective in maintaining order without destroying incentive. He is eminently successful in providing children with the affective support and yet firm setting of limits which they require and may not find in a fatherless home; he is a surrogate father without usurping the role.

Some of the personal attributes Mr. and Mrs. Z possess appear to be particularly instrumental in creating a climate in which young children, particularly those from segments of the population with special needs, can flourish. The creative leadership they have achieved results from the ability to both oversee operations and delegate authority, on a reasonable scale, coupled with a sensitivity to human relationships. They are flexible and highly responsive to change; their approach is innovative, guided always by 'common sense' and evaluated with a sense of humor.

There are a number of factors which have made it more easy for the Z's to achieve success than would be the case for an applicant today. Because the school had obtained a zoning variance and had been previously licensed under Mr. Z's mother's ownership, they could assume operation with a minimum of negotiation with the Department of Social Welfare. They point out that when they took over the school, restrictions were not as tight as they are now: "Technically you're supposed to buy a place before you get your license, but you have no guarantee of income. You must have available capital unless you buy an existing school, as we did". Restrictive regulations, while formulated for protective purposes, may in practice favor individuals and groups backed by large capital resources and possibly inspired less by humanitarian than by monetary motives.

In addition, proposed legislation poses a constant threat. Raising the minimum age of children acceptable in group care to 2½ years would seriously affect the program at Happy Hours. The desire for autonomy on the part of many private school owners is, perhaps, in the case of those who exhibit certain qualifications, a legitimate one; notes Mrs. Z., "We feel that we can decide best which children we can accept and be responsible for". In the case of schools such as Happy Hours, there appears to be much evidence in favor of such a position.

B. Blueberry Hill: Individualized Services in Day Care

A professional-educational orientation need not be necessarily equated with highly structured, academic programs for young children. We found in our sample of proprietary schools some in which the initiative of an able professionally-oriented director, without the benefit of extensive financial backing, had been the prime factor in the establishment of a preschool program which combined the more positive features of both Fair Oaks and Happy Hours.

Physical Setting

Like Fair Oaks and Happy Hours, Blueberry Hill, a privately-owned facility with an enrollment of 70 children 13/ from two and one-half to five years of age, is located in a primarily residential community on the periphery of the Los Angeles metropolitan area. Also a point of entry for in-migrants from other state and national regions, it has experienced tremendous growth similar to that in the San Fernando Valley; population increased an almost unbelievable 431% between 1950 and 1960. Unlike the valley, however, its proximity to industry and a comparatively undistinguished terrain have conspired to eliminate the image of prestige. Due to geographic limitations and less stringent zoning practices, among other factors, population density is above average. Where there are fewer than 2000 persons per square mile in the valley, there are, on the average, between 5,000 and 7,500 people per square mile in the area surrounding Blueberry Hill. These figures reflect a higher number of members per household, and a greater number of young children than in the communities from which Fair Oaks draws its clientele or in Los Angeles as a whole. With its high proportion of married couples with children, (the combined rate for separation and divorce is less than 3%, lowest for all those areas from which our sample schools are taken) and relatively low socio-economic level, the community in which Blueberry Hill is located evidenced a desperate need for child care facilities in the mid-fifties. The children who come to Blueberry Hill are seldom handicapped by the lack of a mother or father (nearly all come from two-parent families), but they do represent a cross-section of individual problems which transcend barriers of social class or race. Some have physiological or neurological handicaps; some are from socially and/or economically disadvantaged families. A large number may all too soon

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[13] Since the program encompasses a highly individualized schedule, only fifty children -- the licensed capacity of the school -- are ever in attendance at any one time.

be labeled by society as educationally handicapped, the 'slow learners'. Clientele of Blueberry Hill is thus made up, essentially, of two segments of the population: the children of young professional families in the area, and those from both within the community and outside of it, some of whom travel great distances, who have been referred to the school by a number of professional agencies in the Los Angeles area. These agencies include therapeutic clinics, hospitals, educational institutions, social welfare agencies and similar organizations specializing in the diagnosis and treatment of physical, mental and emotional disorders of young children. Some of the children are referred by Head Start groups in the Los Angeles area. Few of the children in the program are severely disturbed, but among the so-called "normal" children at Blueberry Hill are many who need extra understanding and support in learning to function effectively in life, both as an individual and as a member of a group.

Developing Creative Leadership: The Evolution of a Professional

Like Mrs. Z. at Happy Hours, Mrs. B., the owner and director of Blueberry Hill, is young, vibrant, and physically attractive. An art major at a local junior college, she received her A.A. degree in the early 1950's. Following marriage and motherhood, she planned to go back to work, but had no place to leave her small child. After visiting a number of schools which were, in her estimation, 'dreadful', she abandoned her original plans and went back to school to take courses in child development. In her search for course work in human growth and development ("hard to find in those days") she attended classes at a number of private four-year liberal arts colleges in the Southern California area. The reputation of several of these institutions specializing in the professional preparation of teachers of young children had been long established. Her plan, which evolved with the decision to open her own school, was to complete two years of training before beginning actual operation.

Acquisition of property for her school was not the comparatively simple matter it had been for the Z's, but one of their problems soon became one of hers, namely, that of zoning restrictions imposed by the city 14/. She spent a year looking for a suitable place to open her school -- 'suitable' defined as being one with the right physical setting: trees, enough yard space, a warm, home-like atmosphere. When she found the building and grounds she wanted -- an older, two-story residence,

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[14] Blueberry Hill, like Happy Hours, was required to obtain a zoning variance to locate in a residential area.

in all likelihood once occupied, like the Z's property, by an owner of surrounding citrus orchards, vestiges of which remain in the grounds which surround the house -- the area had to be rezoned to permit establishment of a "commercial" venture in a residential area. Mrs. B. perceived early in her career the importance of integrating the needs and goals of the school with those of the community:

> "I went to the neighbors and explained my plans, and they signed a petition. I also went to the Chamber of Commerce, and they were behind me. . . they felt I would carry through as I said I would. The superintendent of the school district was my first customer. . . he enrolled his children in my school!"

By her words and by her actions Mrs. B. projected, even before the doors of Blueberry Hill had been opened, an image of professional integrity and distinctive competence.

In interpreting her plans, logically conceived and based on her perception of a growing community need, to leaders in the community, she began to establish a network of professional contacts which have been essential to the continuing success of the school. Her contact with the superintendent, she agrees, was crucial in paving the way for future development: "The school board was behind me. . . You must work with the community and not have a chip on your shoulder". Where some proprietary owners appear to feel instinctively that the tides of governmental opinion and bureaucratic control run against them, Mrs.B. accepts the burden of proof of competence with equanimity.

Mrs. B. would be the first to agree, however, that good humor and ability to relate to people, with the purpose not of manipulation but communication, do not solve the hard realities of establishing a suitable child-rearing environment. Referring to the availability of locations for nursery schools, she concurs with frustrated present and potential owners: "It is impossible to find anything suitable unless you build your own. Zoning should be changed; it's not fair to put children in an industrial area".

In 1957 Blueberry Hill opened with an enrollment of children of teachers, lawyers, social workers, nurses and other parents in professional occupations. There are now few who come from the immediate neighborhood which is highly transient; many parents drive 'quite a few miles' to bring their children to the school, whose reputation for excellence has spread partly through parental word-of-mouth and partly through referral by various agencies throughout the Los Angeles area.

The present building remains as it was in the beginning with respect to site. Because of zoning restrictions present quarters cannot be enlarged and enrollment cannot be increased due to licensing regulations, which are fixed by square footage and rigidly enforced. There is no over-crowding of children, although the residential design of the physical plant creates some dysfunctions, particularly with respect to eating and toileting facilities. The indoor rooms are warm and home-like; the outdoor yards reminiscent of another era, an oasis in an arid desert of tract homes, shopping centers, and freeways. What the yards lack in man-made equipment they offer in natural areas for children to explore. A swimming pool used during the summer session divides the older building, housing the kitchen, dining room and activity areas for the 2's to 4's downstairs and an office for the director upstairs, from a newer building in which program for the 5's is conducted. From 6:30 in the morning until 6:30 at night, five teachers, including the director, work with children in groups of up to twenty. The younger children, grouped or ungrouped according to the activity, move more or less freely through the activity rooms of the old house, whose direct access to the play area facilitates free flow of traffic. The kindergarten children remain separated in their one-story building on the other side of the chain-link-fenced pool except during outdoor free play periods when they occupy one of the three yards behind the main house.

As at Happy Hours, the program at Blueberry Hill creates a warm, home-like atmosphere, but the goals represent a more complex philosophy of early childhood education. Cognitive learning experiences are believed to be derived from unstructured experimentation; by providing a concretely rich environment, the adult supplies the child with the potential of abstract learning, rather than the finished product. The activity pattern is similar to that of Happy Hours, with the emphasis on free play and non-teacher-directed activity, but children and teacher interact more frequently.

Program format at Blueberry Hill follows a flexible pattern designed to foster experimentation, particularly with art materials, and at the same time encourage the children to learn to cope with human components of the environment -- to adjust to group situations and learn to function as members of a group while retaining their own individuality. Within a framework of firm limits ("children feel more secure if they know they have rules to obey"), the teacher provides as much warmth and affection as possible. The need for permissiveness in some areas combined with firm, non-punitive discipline in others results in an unusual pattern for Lessons Taught seldom found in child care centers. It appears to spring from two sources: the philosophy of early childhood education which the director has come to hold due to her professional training, and the special needs of the children, many of whom are atypical in some way and require both clearly-conveyed expectations and greater amounts of affective response by teachers than an entirely normal population. As a result, the greatest number of Lessons Taught occur in three categories: control and restraint, creativity, and consideration of the rights of others. The overall ratio of Lessons Taught is extremely low, however, following the pattern of teaching style designed to foster independence. The unusually high frequency of teacher encouragement of child-initiated behavior further confirms the awareness on the part of teachers for strong ego support for these children. Teacher manner was predominantly sensitive to the childrens' needs; the response of the children, in turn, was rated as either 'definitely' or 'exceptionally' interested in most cases.

Operating Constraints and Coping Strategies

In spite of the impression of idyllic calm and lack of problems which such an analysis conveys, it is a false one. No organization, including, and perhaps especially, those caring for young children, can be without discrepant situations, disruptive moments of chaos and crisis, and Blueberry Hill is no exception. What is unique is the ability of the director and staff to cope with and accept such occurrences in a setting where they are even more likely to happen, given the characteristics of the group (i.e., children with special problems), than in a "typical" child care facility. Occupational hazards of child care are many: a teacher fails to appear on the job due to family problems or illness (we arrived one morning to discover not one but three teachers out ill, leaving the director to cope with thirty children); the cook or housekeeper quits (at Blueberry Hill this is not a problem since the director generally prepares the meals with the aid of the teachers); children, upset by problems in the home, throw tantrums; observers arrive when all three of the prior conditions have, by some fickle twist of fate, managed to occur simultaneously [15]. The quality of group care program is conditioned in part by the ability of the center to meet such crises; some centers confront problematic situations with a greater capacity to cope than others. Due to the personal characteristics and training of its director, which in turn have produced a staff which can function well together (and in the absence of the director if necessary), Blueberry Hill is more successful than most centers in adjusting to unanticipated consequences, a potential threat to all formal organizations. One of the most effective strategies in this case has been the delegation of responsibility to staff by Mrs. B.:

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[15] Since observers -- generally pediatric internes, student nurses and teacher trainees -- are frequent at Blueberry Hill, the children are acclimated to "alien" intruders; perhaps for this reason, as much as any, our visit in the school seemed to be more comfortable, and behaviors unstaged, than in the majority of centers in which we observed. Blueberry Hill is unique among most private nursery schools in its lack of purposeful impression management; the performers wear no masks (Cf. Goffman, 1959).

> "I've had the same staff since I opened. . . They've all been here a long time. I have more people apply than I need. My friends (who are directors of other private schools) complain about not being able to build up a good staff, but they're not willing to delegate responsibility. I like my teachers, for example, to have parent contacts. One thing I'm not is indispensable around here! For years at Pre School Association they thought one of my teachers owned the school. You must be willing to share responsibility".

Mrs. B's strong convictions concerning a democratic organizational structure in which responsibilities and privileges are shared among all job levels are a result of her experiences in her own professional training in a similar setting. She apparently feels no threat to her power or prestige, because they are non-existent in her value system. It is true that none of her teachers have yet attained her own level of qualification, but all are taking regular on-the-job training in workshops and extension courses; none have had any experience in other centers, a characteristic Mrs. B. purposely seeks. We asked which type of preparation she felt was most essential to teacher qualification, formal training or experience:

> "I certainly wouldn't want my teachers to have private school experience -- it's so rigid and structured. College training in early childhood education is good; my teachers must work for a certificate. The local junior college has good classes in this area of specialization. . . A good director must choose people who are willing to learn and who know how to work with children 16/. I paid all of Mrs. K's tuition at UCLA. We work with the high schools and the government job corps training program in a neighboring community. The girls work here and the Federal government pays them".

Like Mr. E. at Fair Oaks, Mrs. B. holds professional preparation of teachers -- to the extent of paying their tuition for courses out of school budget -- as essential to the development of good program. When temporary crises such as those to which we have referred remove such

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[16] Our impression is that Mrs. B. is here referring to inherent ability rather than training -- a warmth and an ability to establish meaningful relationships with children.

teachers from the setting, the effect on program is clear. During our observations a substitute teacher was required to be present; her role conception and job performance stood out in contrast to that of other staff and clearly altered the climate of the setting. While the situation was temporary, it served to point up one of the hazards of a profession in which no amount of long-range planning can completely preclude day-to-day threats to stability, of which lack of a supply of qualified teachers is one of the most insurmountable.

As Mrs. B. herself has acquired greater knowledge and skills in working with children, her interests have become more specialized. As a result, the services she offers to the community have become more and more diverse along with her own interests and network of professional contacts. Program is frequently altered to fit individual children; notes Mrs. B., "The whole program is set up for the individual rather than the group". The diversity of services is reflected in the types of care offered. Blueberry Hill provides for families the most comprehensive schedule of any of the nine centers in our sample: the school will accept for enrollment all ages, from 2½ to 6 years, on a full or part-time basis for any number of days a week according to individual requirement. Because of the widely divergent needs of the children, a special teacher is occasionally hired for a specific child. Working with such children has led to the establishment of contacts with hospitals and neuro-psychiatric centers in the Los Angeles area and has provided an unlimited source of professional advice on a personal basis 17/.

Mrs. B. attributes both her philosophy of early childhood education and her perception of the special needs of some children to her experience at a small local college in whose on-campus nursery school the student t teachers learn to become attuned to the needs of the child:

> "I was so impressed by its acceptance of the individual, its unstructured approach. The schools that I saw when I wanted to send my daughter were too structured; the children were so clean but they didn't look happy. This was the only place I'd been where things were so different. I saw only professional people who felt the same way about children and had the same philosophy I did, and it was great".

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[17] Some of the children Blueberry Hill take are autistic. "When the case is extreme, the children are very withdrawn and cause no group problems. As they improve and become outgoing, however, the situation becomes a little more complex".

In her student teaching experience she had worked with a non-verbal boy, the beginning of her interest in working with disadvantaged children. At the suggestion of the college staff, the State Department of the Blind sent a social worker to Blueberry Hill to see if Mrs. B. would take visually handicapped children. "I saw the need for me to take classes", observed Mrs. B., "and I've had at least two or three every semester until this past year".

The network of professional relationships, influence, and involvement Mrs. B. has built up over the last decade not only insures survival in what can sometimes be a hostile environment for private school owners, but guarantees competence in program. She has, or has had, personal contact with a vast number of individuals in the Southern California area who have long histories of commitment to early childhood education over the years. Working with the local school board on community issues provides an opportunity for mutual exchange of concerns and problems. The ties with professional groups are more than merely verbal; priority in enrollment is given at Blueberry Hill to children of teachers and nurses from the local school and hospital. In addition, she works closely on a variety of projects with hospitals and clinics, teacher training institutions, and Head Start programs; one summer found her at the University of Alaska teaching trainees in the Head Start program there. Her eyes light up as she speaks of her experiences -- some amusing, some tender -- with her Eskimo students.

Mrs. B. clearly represents Merton's concept of the cosmopolitan citizen (Merton, 1957). Her interests are not confined to local concerns although they have their roots there; her contacts spread throughout the region through channels opened by her membership in both the Southern California Association for the Education of Young Children and the Pre School Association. Although the latter group is not professionally-oriented, her wide spectrum of interests and considerable degree of acumen in business matters have led her to retain membership. Once an active office-holder, her involvement over the years has waned as her professional and community ties have been strengthened. She expresses concern over the tendency of some factions of this group to emphasize the entrepreneurial aspect of child care. Of the few owners whose concern with profit-making occasionally supersedes that of providing good experiences for children, she observes:

> "I wish they'd develop a new outlook -- they're so concerned about making more money. It's a frightened type of philosophy. They shut out good sources, even fight the State Department of Social Welfare. I'll bet I make more money than they do, with my non-commercial approach".

Understandably, Mrs. B. is viewed with suspicion by some owners, who refer to her clique within the Pre School Association as "the university group".

Because of her skill in developing satisfying human relationships and exchanging service for service in the meeting of mutual needs, Mrs. B. has found her experiences with the Department of Social Welfare to be "excellent":

> "They've always sent me letters commending me on my program, my staff, the physical facilities. There's a great deal of turnover in workers, but we always get along. Some are men, some are women, but they always have one thing they're interested in; sometimes it's food, sometimes puppets, sometimes child growth and development. Oh yes, once when the lunch was not good -- some of the staff were ill and we had to serve a simple meal -- the worker wrote me a letter and said the meal was not nutritious -- but that was the only time. I pamper my social worker!"

The informal relationship which has developed between licensing consultants and Mrs. B. is based on a feeling of basic trust and respect made possible by her ability to accept different points of view without fear or hostility. Her professional knowledge has made it more, rather than less, easy to do so because she feels comfortable about the goals, standards and values which she has formulated over the years.

Relationships with parents follow the same pattern, founded on basic trust and perception of individual need:

> "I have no group parent program. I talk with each parent individually once a week. When there is a problem I sit down with them and discuss it. A parent needs to feel comfortable with me. I try not to be personal friends with parents, although my friends send their children here".

Mrs. B. is not, in the contemporary idiom, "uptight" about either her goals or her methods; basically an extrovert, she has learned how to be as supportive of adult needs and interests as of children's.

Those qualities which have made for smooth relations in what more than one director has found to be a stormy sea of conflicting group interests -- governmental agency vs. private entrepreneur, professional vs. layman, authoritarian vs. permissive -- became evident when we asked Mrs. B. what she feels makes a good director:

> "The same thing that makes a good teacher -- flexibility, understanding of people's differences. I let each teacher set up her own program. I have a different feeling about staff than most directors. I like to work with professionals, with someone who has a good mentality and some professional training, who is thinking of the child's growth and development. We don't have to have identical philosophies".

The cement which binds the school together into a cohesive unit in which group solidarity is unusually strong is not ideology, as at Fair Oaks, but a willingness to let each staff member accept as much responsibility as she can competently handle and to reward that effort monetarily as well as psychologically. From one-third to one-half of the gross of a nursery school (the latter figure at Blueberry Hill) is allotted to teachers' salaries, according to Mrs. B.:

> "I think good teachers are more important than anything -- buildings, equipment, food, what have you. I determine teachers' salaries on gross income and raise them periodically. I know that many other schools let their teachers go when their salaries are getting too high. I base the raise on the teacher's responsibilities, the amount of work she is required to do. In the past eleven years I've had only twelve employees who are not still with me".

In an environment such as that at Blueberry Hill, the potential for improving financial and professional status is thus not limited as in many group care settings. The incentive for upgrading qualification and putting theory into practice as it is being learned is built into such an organizational structure. The benefits are numerous -- strong staff loyalty and increasing competency, removal of pressures from the director and, ultimately, the opportunity for the director to concentrate on implementing long-range goals rather than on day-to-day detail.

In spite of an effective organizational structure which circumvents many of the environmental pressures which afflict other group care facilities, Blueberry Hill is not -- as we have noted -- insulated against all operational constraints. The economic realities remain; there are never quite enough funds to pay what Mrs. B. considers adequate salaries for her teachers, and the cost of supplies -- including food and play equipment -- creates a strong financial pressure. Because the educational philosophy on which Blueberry Hill was founded espouses freedom of expression and experimentation in various media, the budget for equipment, particularly art materials, runs high:

> "Being permissive -- although that's not the word I'd really pick -- as we are we lose a lot of small things. If we were regimented we'd have less expense -- but I wouldn't want it that way".

As a response to the pressure of both growing demand for services and increased operating costs, private school owners have two alternatives -- raising fees or expanding facilities. Since the former is likely to endanger the ability of the school to compete for clients (even though competition does not appear to occur as such) and concern for families' needs often precludes it, the establishment of a school at another site is often preferable. Mrs. B. is in the process of acquiring an additional school, nearer her own home, to accommodate more children and to provide added revenue: "I can't increase staff income", she observes, "unless I branch out". Blueberry Hill is presently licensed for a capacity enrollment of 50 children ("That's all the school will hold. We're stepping on one another around here") and it is impossible to enlarge facilities because of zoning regulations. Mrs. B. feels that a school could be larger if it had enough space -- assuming that qualified staff was available to handle it.

The outdoor space which Blueberry Hill does have has not been developed to its full potential. As a natural area which abounds with shade and citrus trees; with places to inspect plants and insects, stray kittens and even an ancient tortoise-in-residence; and quiet spots for passive moments and private thoughts so important for children in daily group care programs, it is ideal, a yard for which many a director of an asphalt-bound center might yearn. But the amount-to-do per child -- the ratio of pieces of play equipment, singly or in units, to the number of children, was low; in several of the yards there was a minimum amount of such equipment. One possible explanation is the teaching style of the staff; at Blueberry Hill teachers interact with the children a great deal, and the latter have less need for non-human play objects in the environment. Another may be the very real limitations which an unyielding budget places on expenditures; priorities demand that other items come first 18/. Mrs. B. recently embarked on a new business venture (in addition to a number of other interests, including a summer camp and swimming school on the grounds with her teen-age daughter as assistant): the design and building of custom playground equipment for young children.

Evaluative Summary

The success of Blueberry Hill is due in part to the fact that it fills a community need which has for the most part gone unmet -- that for a preschool program tailored to fit individual, and often highly specialized, requirements of young children in a flexible, unstructured environment. It is apparently able to do so because its director possesses those qualities of executive professional leadership which have enabled her to develop a competent, qualified staff. Her role definition emphasizes, as being of primary importance, the training of

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[18] Of the physical plant, Mrs. B. observes: "It's not ideal, but I couldn't afford to build what I thought was perfect. The money is better used on staff".

staff, "helping them to learn new things and make decisions", as well as seeing that the children have a good program, and counseling parents. Because trained teachers -- trained, that is, in the complex teaching role which she has come to believe is the only meaningful one -- are difficult to find, she herself provides the incentive and the model. Besides professional skills, she possesses the business knowledge to run an efficient school without compromising the quality of the program. Berhaps most instrumental to her ability to provide good care is the intricate and far-reaching network of personal relationships which she has developed, not for personal power and prestige, but for the purpose of widening her knowledge and effectiveness in the education of young children. One of her close personal friends and a professional advisor is the director of a nearby public Children's Center -- an unusual alliance for a private owner to enter. Their common bond -- a mutual interest in and understanding of the young child's needs -- transcends any conflict of interest which otherwise might occur.

Genuinely cosmopolitan in nature, Mrs. B's present concerns for day care extend beyond the immediate problems of her own school. One is the gap between nursery education and kindergarten; she feels ungraded groups from preschool through third grade should be established. Noting complaints from elementary school teachers that children from Blueberry Hill won't 'sit still' in school, she remarks: "It is not the administrator's fault -- they feel the same way as I do. . . the real problem is that the community is not ready, not educated. Children should be free to move ahead at their own speed". Another concern is the burden which the combination of sudden and simultaneous social, racial, and economic integration places on many young children. A number of the children at Blueberry Hill are from Head Start groups and suffer, Mrs. B. feels, from being expected to function at maturity levels which they have not yet attained: "The Head Start group is from a transient area -- they're so far behind, so disadvantaged. Our other children do not have the desperate need for affection that the Head Start children do".

A clue to the philosophy which is to a large extent responsible for the quality of program at Blueberry Hill is revealed in the anecdotes she tells about her experiences with the Head Start trainees in Alaska. While using paints in an art workshop, her students were confused by her non-rigid experimental approach:

> "They'd keep telling me "Don't drip" because the previous instructor had taught them this. 'Well', I said, "I think dripping is fun!' When the administration discovered that I had ordered powdered paints for the class to give them the experience of mixing them, I was 'called on the carpet' for my alarming display of initiative. They told me no one had ever done that before. I just went ahead and did it!"

As a result, not only did she get her paints -- but an offer for the job of running the Head Start program, as well.

CHAPTER VII

PROPRIETARY NURSERIES (continued)

It may be difficult, if not impossible, for many of our readers whose concerns are with group care facilities in urban environments to identify with the settings we have described so far. The factors of location in residential suburbs, ethnically homogeneous WASP clientele (except for a small percentage of families at Blueberry Hill), low population densities (compared with the urban core) and fairly high socio-economic levels remove most of the pressures which inner-city child care centers, particularly those of the ghetto, face. In Los Angeles poverty often is not as visible as in other cities, but it is present, nevertheless, and the frustration is just as great, a condition to which the Watts 'riots' of 1965 were bitter testimony.

Day care needs of poverty-level families in the inner-city areas of Los Angeles are met by public Children's Centers and by the handful of charitable day nurseries. Blue-collar families of somewhat higher income have access to church-sponsored day care programs, one of which will be described in the next chapter, and to a number of proprietary nurseries, most of them marginal in character because of the limited income which lower parent fees provide. Inevitably, the more stable and high-quality facilities located within the central city area tend to serve the more prosperous among its residents, who, though they may be ethnically mixed, tend to share a common status and aspirations. Two such day care centers are described in this chapter. Even the stability these facilities have achieved is precarious and often illusory, as our return visits for the present study have revealed.

A. The Decline and Fall of a Child-Oriented Program: The Case of Pooh Corner

Our observations of group care tend to confirm our growing belief that environmental pressures, some resulting directly from the regulatory process, tend to militate against the ongoing stability of day care programs. Even the best programs, seen in terms of both quality and fulfillment of community need, sometimes founder in the occasionally capricious winds of individual licensing workers' opinions.

A strong director, possessing the knowledge and skill which effective leadership requires, can do much to offset this problem, but without a base of support in other sections of the community, preferably including access to legal or professional power, even the best program (judged in terms of the needs of the immediate group to be served) may be threatened. While environmental adaptation is a necessary and desirable feature of organizational growth, it can also impair the self-direction of the organization -- a phenomenon which appears to occur frequently in the field of group care -- and tends to weaken program and discourage personnel. Licensing, as an essential preventive measure, serves to eliminate potential nursery owners unfit in terms of temperament, training, experience or resources. Nurseries which succeed in securing licenses have then to cope with the vagaries of actual operation, which tend to encourage survival of the fittest. The ongoing licensing process constitutes an additional pressure with which directors must cope, though ideally it operates to help maintain program quality. Where it becomes arbitrary or capricious, it may be the final straw for some hard-beset directors. It is in the interest of all those involved -- children and parents, licensing agencies and owners, in short the community as a whole -- that programs and individuals which display integrity and competence be aided by realistic regulation in their attempt to provide good care.

In the course of our original study we visited a medium-sized privately-owned nursery school in the heart of a predominantly commercial high-density area close to the heart of metropolitan Los Angeles. Its proximity to a variety of sub-cultural areas served to heighten its marginal position, both geographically and socially. Only a short distance in one direction is an established affluent residential neighborhood, the result of the acquisitiveness of another generation; in another direction is the financial and geographical core of the city. On a third side lies an ethnic community in which the bagels and lox take precedence over the hamburgers, tacos, and pizzas in the endless stretch of drive-in restaurants which are the wall-to-wall carpeting of typical Southern California commercial streets.

Social changes in the neighborhood have resulted in the creation of new community needs, to which it is likely that the establishment of Pooh Corner in 1955 was a response. Because it is surrounded by such disparate social enclaves--a typical urban interstitial zone, sandwiched between affluence and poverty, high-rise and one-family dwellings, natural beauty and Madison-avenue ugliness -- it is impossible to telescope the characteristics of neighborhood or clientele into one representative unit. Suffice it to say that at the time Pooh Corner was begun sixty percent of the parents who placed their children in the school were self-employed, with a number engaged in professional work. Less than a third of the families at that time were one-parent. The families were, therefore, using the program less as a substitute than supplement for the home environment. The school offered both nursery school and day care, both part and full time _1/.

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[1] The program at Pooh Corner was one of the most diversified in our sample facilities -- public, private and non-profit.

The director, a warm, intellectually inquisitive but essentially pragmatic woman in her mid-forties, clearly articulated her hopes for the children's experiences:

> "We hope to give children the ability to develop a sense of responsibility, to become more flexible -- as I hope I myself do -- and to develop greater self-reliance in meeting the needs of each other in the group. To achieve this goal requires a certain amount of self-discipline -- perhaps one might more accurately term this quality 'self-direction'. Learning often takes place through play, and we give academic instruction (parents expect this) through games, but learning always depends upon what a child brings to it. The school must relate abstract concepts such as letters to direct experience [2]. I don't have children take pictures or papers home. I try to let the parent know by the child's activities at home that he is content with himself here..
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> "This is a home-away-from-home (but) when the children come to me, I'm not 'mama' unless the child needs mama a while or needs to be angry. . . then I am. I sense what they are today, each morning. . . It's important to try in some way to tell children you know that they want you. But the teacher must not encourage dependency; sometimes a teacher gets attached to children out of her own needs. The children benefit temporarily but they aren't freed to find their own world.
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> "Obedience is a rather broad term -- I don't like the word; I'd rather call it consideration. Children must learn concern for others, plus the reality of physical hazards. The ultimate goal is the self-regulated child.
>
> "I've been told the unique thing about this preschool is our approach in meeting the needs of children, allowing them to find their answers. It is not a permissive attitude, though; you cannot allow them all the choices. . . I think my main role as director is to let the children know I'm glad they're here".

Mrs. O., the owner-director of Pooh Corner, gave some of the most complex,original, and non-stereotyped responses in describing the content of both the teacher and director role of any day care personnel interviewed in our study. Based on her own experience, it appeared to reflect a genuine concern for children and closely approximated our working definition of the child-centered teacher role-concept.

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[2] Kindergarten program was an important aspect of Pooh Corner's services.

Teacher performance at Pooh Corner bore out the stated goals of the staff. Our observational data yielded evidence of a concerted effort on the part of teachers to provide experiences in which children could develop self-sufficient modes of behavior. In addition, there was an unusual combination of emphasis on observing customary social practices and mores (rules of social living) and activities stimulating creativity, awe and wonder. The high sensitivity of staff to children's needs and the stimulating tempo combined to evoke a consistently high degree of involvement on the part of the children. Through the program the individual child had an opportunity to learn those basic rules which a cohesive social structure demands of group members, and at the same time to learn how to achieve individual non-conformity and freedom through creative, self-fulfilling experiences.

The development of such a program came about in a physical setting which was undistinguished. Located on an extremely busy main thoroughfare a short distance from the freeway, the small building, although originally built to house a nursery school, could easily be mistaken for a converted store. The indoor rooms were an undivided sea of brown linoleum. The even smaller adjacent yard, by all odds, should have produced problems; a narrow L-shaped gravel-covered corridor between the school and a neighboring apartment house, it invited potential disaster in the form of scraped knees, unseen acts of aggression, and frustration over trying to ride tricycles over rocks. Although the physical space was rated low on organization, and was not pleasing to the adult eye, there was, in fact, a great deal to do in the yard, both in amount and variety. Domestic animals -- hens, rabbits, and hamsters -- lived in cages in the yard, and a friendly dog scampered through the play areas.

Although the setting was unimpressive, the program was quite the opposite. Because the staff functioned with comfort and efficiency in the particular environment, physical space lent itself with remarkable ease to program goals. The director herself was well qualified by personality, experience, and professional training. With her husband, she had opened a school nearly two decades previously and employed her sister as teacher. Her sister then left to open her own school, which Mrs. O. eventually took over and which became Pooh Corner. Comparatively little staff turnover occurred over the years. The housekeeper, Mrs. O. noted, had been there since the school was begun in 1955: "I feel she's a beautiful kind of teacher". Mrs. O. herself taught at Pooh Corner nearly two years before taking over as director. In the course of her training in early childhood education, which began with course work at a state university in the 1940's culminating in a bachelor's degree in home economics, and which included additional junior college classes, nursery education workshops, and varied community and family experiences, Mrs. O. developed her own understanding of children's needs.

Constraints on her program as perceived by Mrs. O. did not include the limitations of the physical setting, nor did space interfere with good program as we observed it. However, as director of a licensed day nursery, Mrs. O. was not autonomous in evaluating her program, but was obliged also to cope with the perceptions of outside agents. In our earlier interview, Mrs. O. alluded briefly to some of the difficulties which arise between directors whose role concept does not coincide with that of the agent responsible for interpretation of licensing policy -- the social worker. She perceived the goals and standards of the Department of Social Welfare as she had encountered them to be "all theory and impractical; their interest was apart from the children, in record-keeping and such". Because she felt her role as director demanded involvement with the children and her licensing consultant interpreted official policy as requiring director job performance in a solely administrative capacity, tensions mounted and, as it turned out, conflict was inevitable.

Upon our return two years later, we discovered that Pooh Corner was no longer in existence. The primary source of defeat was not desire for more appropriate quarters or clientele; program was ideally suited to the diverse ethnic balance which is representative of the community today. The real villain of the piece appears to have been the arbitrary interpretation of licensing regulations, reflecting lack of agreement on what constitutes good care. Refusal on the part of either individual to compromise principles led to the defeat of an essentially excellent program, and paved the way for the subsequent substitution of what may become an adequate but mediocre one instead.

Perceptions of a Newcomer:
The Perils of Entrepreneurial Day Care in California

We spoke in 1968 with the new owner of the preschool which occupies the site of the now defunct Pooh Corner. She and her husband had come to Southern California only two months previously from the Mid-West to seek a more felicitous climate and to expand their financial interests (which included ownership of a preschool "back home", left under the supervision of a family member). The background and training of Mrs. M., the new owner, formerly a public service representative with a utility company 3/,

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[3] Mrs. M. has had no training or experience in early childhood education other than a 'few workshops' at a branch of the state university.

lead her to define her role quite differently from that of Mrs. O., who saw herself as an active participant in the program. As owner of the school Mrs. M. is interested solely in the entrepreneurial, administrative aspect of her job 4/.

The past and present experience of Mrs. M. as owner of a preschool has resulted in her negative view of licensing policies and practices in general. Her complaints are a catalogue of the ills, real or perceived, which afflict the private individual attempting to begin operation of a group care facility, particularly the newcomer to a community who does not "get in on the ground floor" of child care in the area. In turn, they reflect the problems which the Department of Social Welfare faces in dealing with a large number of applicants who visualize income opportunities in group care, but may be unqualified to assume responsibility for such a program. Mrs. M's opinions regarding the perceived inequities of licensing practices reflect some of the problems she saw as common to group care regardless of regional location. Of licensing in her own state, she observed:

> "It was very lax. . . really a farce. The rules were ridiculous. They'd refuse you a license if they didn't like the flooring or window spacing. There was no relevance to child care. The rules made good child care prohibitive".

The anecdotal references which Mrs. M. made to conditions in other facilities were intended to illustrate her perception of the arbitrariness of licensing enforcement in that state. Since facilities continued in operation after licenses were denied, she had concluded that the license was a worthless piece of paper: "All it meant was that you had to put up with inspectors and pay a $15.00 a year fee. . . When I first started I was afraid of losing my license so I never inquired about those inequities. . .". Her comments concerning Department of Social Welfare policies in California are no more generous. She feels the attitude of her worker towards the discipline of children is too permissive ("I don't believe in beating children, but I believe in planned discipline. It should be in a manner appropriate for a child and firm. . . Sometimes they need a good whack. . .") and bridles at what she considers the limitations on her autonomy in deciding what the children do or do not need. The objection to infringement on her right to make judgments extends to the provision of services:

> "The Department of Social Welfare policies contradict themselves [4]. They like you to use 'discretion', age-wise, as to which children you take. I feel that if a child needs preschool and the family physician, for example, recommends it for a child, then we should be allowed to take him. . . but the Department of Social Welfare refuses to allow us to make decisions [5]. You have to report everything. I can run this school; I don't have to be checked up on constantly".

Added to her woes is a series of economic road-blocks which Mrs. M. feels are a nearly insurmountable obstacle for good child care:

> "The economic pressures are the greatest. Property in California as a whole, but especially in the Los Angeles area, is prohibitive to small businesses such as preschools. It's been made worse since the Department of Social Welfare ruled that C-2 (commercial-zoned) property must be used [6]. This makes it 'out of the world' financially. You have to buy the building and land and equipment and hire staff and you still don't have your first child. You must have capital and lots of it. I would still like to build a school but this is impossible. My school back home, which I own, makes more money than this one, which I'm renting. My other school is beautiful but I can sell it for only $26,000. I can probably get $90,000 for this dump".

In spite of the financial problems of which she speaks, Mrs. M. feels that the operation of a private facility can be very satisfactory economically speaking; "you can definitely make money or I wouldn't be in the business" 7/. The beginning in California was something less than spectacular "because we bought at a bad time; it was in the spring and enrollment was down because people go on vacations" 8/.

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[4] Mrs. M. indulges, unfortunately, in her own contradictions. On the one hand, she deplores 'people who try to make money' out of child care, but freely acknowledges her prime interest -- now that her original motive, care for her own son, no longer exists -- is to operate a successful business. She berates licensing agencies for being concerned with cracks in the floor, yet admires the strict standards of the Department of Health in her own state, which she felt was more concerned with the welfare of children than the California Department of Social Welfare. She was clearly more concerned with the physical custodial aspect of child care than with the other areas considered important by Mrs. O..

[5] Children below the age of two years are not permitted in group care in California.

[6] This statement is incorrect; the requirement is made by local zoning ordinances, not by the Department of Social Welfare.

Epilogue

On our return visit, the building and yard which once housed Pooh Corner did indeed look like a 'dump'. During the process of changing hands it had undergone rapid deterioration, while waiting for projected renovation. Gone was the warmth once provided by dedicated staff, stimulating program, 'chicken soup in the kitchen', and animals in the yard -- the climate of 'caring'. Although children were present it resembled a mid-20th century Ellis Island, deserted and forlorn. Once the entrance to a new world for young children, it appeared to have become, at least temporarily, a way station to mediocrity.

The history of Pooh Corner illustrates the tenuous hold which group care all too frequently has on mere survival, let alone quality. It reveals the difficulties which both owners and licensing agencies experience in achieving their goals, which are often defined in different terms. Unfortunately, the attempt to upgrade qualifications of personnel and physical settings outlined in formal policy sometimes achieves a reverse effect through the interpretive process. The striving for a sound theoretical basis for creating child-rearing environments outside of the home can result in fixation on instrumentalities -- i. e., the number of inches between cots -- because these are the things which can be conveyed through concrete directives. The case of Pooh Corner particularly points up the problem of the owner-director like Mrs. O. who possesses the training and the experience to provide children with meaningful experiences and families with needed services, but whose philosophy and role concept do not coincide with that of the regulatory agency, as interpreted by its current licensing worker.

Personality conflict between owner-director and licensing worker, such as that which appears to have contributed to the demise of Pooh

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[7] It may be significant that, in comparison to programs such as that at Blueberry Hill in which at least one-half of the gross income is paid in teacher salaries, Mrs. M. allots, at full capacity, approximately one-third of total income to this aspect of operating costs.

[8] This is apparently a California phenomenon, a regional variation which adds one more unanticipated consequence to the problems of the potential owner from out of the state.

Corner, tends to heighten the suspicion and fear that owners sometimes have toward legislative controls aimed at upgrading care. The threat to autonomy and personal judgment, as well as the economic hardship that regulations and standards can induce, is felt not only by those who have entered the business of group care because of the profit-making motive [8], but by those whose first desire is to provide for the needs of parents and children. Often this desire results in a distinctive program such as that of Pooh Corner. The prolonged assignment to a particular facility of a licensing worker whose beliefs and attitudes are in direct contradiction to those of the owner or director can result in a negative and potentially destructive situation for both. Constant harrassment with instrumentalities, such as the number of inches between windows, the temperature of dish-washing water and the minutes per day devoted to record-keeping, can destroy a program in which the director believes the welfare of the children to be measured in less arithmetic terms [9].

Unfortunately, the result of such insistence upon the letter of the law [10] may be the emergence of the very conditions regulatory agencies seek to prevent: unqualified operators who, in spite of the best of intentions in many cases, may not provide the kind of experiences most beneficial to children. Interestingly enough, Mrs. M., although she appears to be the answer to a health inspector's dream in her devotion to beautifullly antiseptic surroundings, fails to grasp some of the more essential meanings of child growth and development. In view of such problems a move to upgrade the educational qualifications of directors must be considered a step in the right direction. At the level at which regulatory policy becomes operational, however, the crucial issues will probably not be answered by upgraded standards for day care personnel alone. They must be matched by standards (and funding) for consultants whose professional status and training gives them the ability and capability (i.e., discretionary power delegated to the job holder) to distinguish the critical from the incidental. A well-conceived licensing program such as that of the State of California, based as it is on a sound understanding of the goals and methods of early childhood education and derived from a historically long period of involvement in the problems of providing effective group care for children, deserves equally excellent professional performance at the point of impact on the community.

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[8] There appears to be a fine line among operators between making a necessary profit and making 'too much' (a situation to be abhorred -- by others!)The division may well occur at the point at which one's competitor begins to make more money than oneself.

[9] Conversely, the problems of licensing consultants in insuring quality in group care are heightened by having to deal with persons unsuited by temperament, training, or experience for the care of young children.

[10] The distinction between statutory regulations, 'required' standards and 'recommended' practices is not always clear to owners and may possibly be confused in the minds of some licensing workers who have strong feelings about certain standards and may have received limited training for the specific job of consultant.

B. Study in Black and White: The Nursery School in the Transitional Zone
The Case of California Play School

Another type of mid-city facility is California Play School, a large proprietary day nursery whose all-white clientele had become largely Negro. It might best be described as the workingman's Fair Oaks -- more than half of the 100 children enrolled had parents who were blue-collar workers, in construction and other trades. Through a formally structured program which leans heavily on training in social and cognitive skills, the staff sought implementation of goals for the children which are, as formally stated by the owner: "the ability to communicate with each other and with adults, to make a satisfactory social adjustment to the group, to share things and get along, to feel a sense of belonging". The promises such a program holds out -- and perhaps the unspoken wish of the parents of nearly every black child at California Play School -- is the opportunity to be upward and outward bound, out from the ghetto and up into the more affluent and privileged mainstream of American society. In terms of skills and values it offers children, such a program has, in the language of the technological market-place, 'high-pay-off value', and many parents, intuitively sensing this value, eagerly seek such a group environment for their children.

We first spoke with Mrs. C., the owner of California Play School, in 1965 when we made the observations for our original study. Like Mr. E. at Fair Oaks she appeared to possess a degree of personal dynamism and administrative skill which suggest the concept of executive professional leadership to which we have referred, but the professional orientation differs. Her background experience occurred not in teaching but in business, and while she acknowledges the importance of the educator's role, her own role concept is based on the administrative functions and strategies of the nursery school owner's job. She spoke of the need for a synthesis of orientations:

> "In the beginning of the nursery school movement various people without training pioneered in the field, since they saw the community need for baby-sitting. But you can't just baby sit with a group of children. This grass-roots need has worked up to the educators. The result is a whole new combination of skills".

It was a combination of her desire to meet other people's needs and her own economic ones which prompted Mrs. C., as a recent arrival in California, to embark on a business venture as partner with a friend in a nursery school in the Los Angeles area. She soon started a second school, then a third, when she found she couldn't 'break even' in the location she had chosen. She attributed defeat to a number of causes:

lack of option to buy the facilities 11/, high rent, and unstable enrollment 12/. Unlike Happy Hours, the nursery was unable to wait out the lean years and Mrs. C. decided to move to a more advantageous location.

We asked Mrs. C. for her opinions on the strategy of choosing a successful location for a day nursery:

> "It's difficult; there are so many chance factors for success and you can't afford to survey. One side of the street may, for no clear reason, work rather than the other. Nothing is completely predictable. One should make as limited an expenditure initially as possible; don't risk too much at the beginning. Look for an area with a grade school; or consider transportation, which is a headache. You don't locate too close to other schools, either your own or others (which is more difficult to control)".

Zoning, another major obstacle to potential nursery school owners, provoked the following commentary:

> "Private nursery schools are the enigma in zoning. Schools, churches, parks are all provided for; a nursery school is considered a commercial establishment. Getting a variance (for location in a residential area) is too uncertain and too expensive".

The strategy she recommends to prospective owners is to "drive around the area in which you want to locate, look for adaptable buildings or land which is commercially zoned". Commercial property is much more expensive, Mrs. C. notes, than other types and increases the economic burdens which the potential owner faces.

Although profit is a motive to the owners of most private group care facilities ("social workers don't like the idea, but it is a fact") Mrs. C. feels that nursery schools today are less strictly a business venture than in the past:

> "More people today are educationally interested and dedicated. Some have been social workers; a good many have a background in business, such as insurance, or in industry. Others have been teachers".

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[11] Rental of facilities tends to be comparatively unsatisfactory, according to many directors, especially because it tends to prevent improvement of the physical plant.

[12] Winter enrollment was good, Mrs. C. pointed out, but it was non-existent in the summer.

With her own experience in business, and two earlier ventures in nursery school operation behind her, Mrs. C. opened the doors to California Play School. The community in which Mrs. C. chose to locate her new school in 1950 was a predominantly white, middle class, residential semi-suburb of Los Angeles, slumbering in the protective warmth of a healthy California post-war economic climate. It was not affluent, but neither was it poor. Few of the commercial establishments which line the street on which California Play School was located were there at that time, nor was the traffic which rushes by within a few feet of the play yard. Between 1950 and 1960, however, the landscape and the people began to change. The area became what urban ecologists describe as a transitional zone. One of the most marked features of such areas is the change in ethnic composition -- and so it was in this case.

During the decade between 1950 and 1960, the population change in the neighborhood surrounding California Play School was remarkable not for its increase -- a mere 14% -- but for the 'tipping' phenomenon which saw a major change from white to black; by 1960, 34% of the total population was Negro 13/. The neighborhood has remained a comparatively stable social area, due in part to the fact that the majority of inmigrants have come from the Northern and Eastern parts of the United States and thus tend to be more acculturated to urban living and to have a slightly better (although disadvantaged) educational background than those coming from the South. Population per household is below average and the number of children is average 14/. But the statistical picture is nevertheless one of an underprivileged minority group. Population density is, for the Los Angeles area, extremely high. The median value of housing units is low; nearly one-quarter were valued at less than $10,000 in 1960, and 11% were deteriorated. Three-quarters of the families earned less than $8,000; the median income was $5,684, next-to-lowest of all study areas in which our sample day care centers are located. Of even greater significance to the community need for child care was the fact that over 40% of women were in the labor force, and 10% of the families were one-parent 15/.

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[13] By 1970 this figure will most likely have more than doubled.

[14] According to 1960 U.S. Bureau of Census statistics.

[15] Twenty-five percent of the families enrolling children in California Play School had only one parent in the household. At the same time, family income was considerably higher than the average for the area.

Mrs. C. observes that she greeted the ethnic change as a "challenge", an opportunity to meet the needs of the community, which she perceived as requiring not merely custodial care of young children, but formal training in a wide range of individual and group skills. Totally committed to the concept of a privately-sponsored, educationally-oriented preschool program, Mrs. C. designed a program format which she felt appropriate to the clientele and to her own educational attitudes. It is her sincere conviction that a structured, adult-oriented curriculum, including the firm setting of limits and teaching "right" from "wrong" is essential to the healthy social and psychological development of all children 16/, and particularly those in disadvantaged areas. "I tried for the best possible program", she points out, "and the children did improve". Judged on the basis of interviews conducted with parents in an earlier attitudinal study, the families were themselves well pleased with the services they and their children received 17/. Program scheduling provided both full and part-time day care (30 of the 100 children enrolled attended half days only). Children with serious problems were seldom taken.

The "best possible" program, in the opinion of Mrs. C. -- and as seen in our observations at California Play School -- closely resembled that of Fair Oaks. Strongly teacher-directed, program activities were designed to emphasize basic cognitive skills, reinforced by rote learning, memorization of words and numbers, and eye-hand coordination (i.e., coloring pictures, tying shoelaces, etc.). Besides formal training in intellectual and small muscle skills, there was a high frequency of Lessons Taught in rules of social living and self-sufficiency. A high percentage of teacher behavior was directed towards control and restraint of children's behavior.

Teachers at California Play School were somewhat more restrictive and unaffectionate than the expressed philosophy of the director would

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16 "A child without discipline is like a rudderless ship. He will suffer psychological damage without limits. . . such limits provide security".

17 Regarding the types of things parents want from day care, Mrs. C. said she explains program to incoming parents: "Some couldn't care less, some do". Observing that parents sending children part-time appeared to care more about program than those sending them full-time, she explained: "In some cases the child is over-sheltered and has separation anxieties. Some begin part-time and it works well, so the mother gets a job and switches to full day. Some care only about costs, others need flexibility in hours. We're less flexible in hours than we used to be; we can get away with it because we have a good program".

predict. The discrepancy between director role conception and teacher job performance may spring from several sources. One possible explanation is the fact that Mrs. C. leaves curriculum and staff supervision primarily to a non-teaching supervisor whom she employs to fulfill these functions. Mrs. C. speaks with teachers, but the contacts are formal and brief and comparatively infrequent, usually on a weekly basis.

Another reason for the discrepancy may be the difficulty in finding and keeping qualified teachers. Those at California Play School at the time of our observations were older and had less formal training or experience than, for example, the average teacher in public centers. Only one had had experience in other nursery schools or special training in early childhood education. Mrs. C. commented in her interview on the difficulty private owners have in finding good teachers. Dependent on "walk-in" applications and advertisements in local newspaper, she notes with concern the drain on teacher supply which she feels public programs, particularly Federally-funded programs such as Head Start, have created. On the other hand, Mrs. C. is not convinced that the most qualified, dedicated teachers go where the largest salaries are offered: "When you hit a certain salary level", she observes, "you get people not dedicated, but wanting the dollars. We could get better teachers with better salaries, up to a point". Nevertheless, she would like to pay more. Emphasizing that her inability to do so has to do with the teacher-child ratio of 1:10 specified in licensing standards, she uses the argument put forth by the Pre School Association (in which Mrs. C. is an active member and office-holder) at the recent hearing on proposed changes in licensing regulations conducted by the California Department of Social Welfare:

> "If the teacher-child ratio were raised to 1:12 or 1:14 we could afford to have better teachers. Public kindergartens have a ratio of 1:40 18/; our program isn't any different but we're limited to 1:16. We can't pay any more or require more formal education until the ratio is changed".

Teachers' salaries, Mrs. C. notes, are a fixed cost in the operation of a group care facility. In her opinion, in most privately-owned nursery schools in the Southern California area approximately 50 - 60% of gross income goes for staff. "The average range for teacher's

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[18] This figure is something of an exaggeration on Mrs. C's part; the basic standard ratio for kindergartens in the school district in which California Play School is located is 1:25, though it is sometimes exceeded in practice. In some suburban districts kindergarten classes do regularly exceeed 30 or even 35 in enrollment.

salaries is $1.50 to $2.20 per hour; most owners pay on an hourly, some on a monthly basis. Fees are set daily, hourly or weekly, depending on individual school policy". Beyond that limitation, the choice in priorities is up to the individual owner: "You can determine your own destiny, decide what to spend money on". Costs associated with ownership or rental differ. With a school of 50 children "one should make at least $10,000 a year; it might be $20,000 if nothing goes wrong".

Many owners like Mrs. C. opt for expenditures which not only facilitate program, but will bring the highest rate of return. Because physical plant and equipment are, for parents, visible evidence of quality, and possibly because it is easier and certainly far less expensive to acquire a play-house than a qualified teacher, many private nurseries concentrate on upgrading facilities. In response to our question concerning the means by which schools attract clientele, Mrs. C. emphasized the importance of a good, attractive physical plant. She feels that one of the greatest strides that has been taken in the improvement of private school quality in the last twenty years has been in the direction of improved physical facilities. At the time of our visits to California Play School, the staff commented on the street noise, which created conflict with program. Teachers spent a good deal of time separating children from the ivy-covered chain link fence, which offered an inviting -- but not officially sanctioned -- view of the world outside.

White Flight of the Nursery School

It was partly dissatisfaction with the physical features of the setting and partly conditions in the socio-economic environment which induced Mrs. C. to abandon California Play School. The sudden and violent events which erupted in Watts in August of 1965 changed forever the social climate in which California Play School had flourished. Mrs. C., like other white entrepreneurs in the black community, began to feel the resentment which existed:

> "When the riots occurred, we thought the parents would pull their children out. They didn't, but they came in with a chip on their shoulders. I'm still fond of the people, but I wouldn't go into business in that area again. I used to feel we were doing things for the community -- this compensated for the low profit. I don't feel that way any more".

In our second interview with Mrs. C., held in 1968 at her new school, we were again reminded of the transitory nature of group care. Subsequent data have led us to believe that California Play School was the casualty of a not atypical phenomenon in the evolution of group care facilities for young children, particularly those which are under private sponsorship. We asked Mrs. C. why she had moved to her new school, and her answer suggests that there is no simple cause-and-effect relationship in determining the stability of group care, but a circular and complex chain of interdependent variables:

> "I had had two schools -- a small one here (at the present location), which I had owned for ten years and had an enrollment of only twenty children, and the other larger one (California Play School) which I did not own. I had planned to sell this one and buy the other -- where the colored were coming in; this was a challenge. But I couldn't get a buyer for this site and the property owner wouldn't sell the other. At the last minute the owner bought my equipment and took over California Play School himself, hiring a director. So I decided to build a larger school on this site".

The school which Mrs. C. now operates is in a neighborhood similar to that in which she had begun California Play School in the early 50's. The building itself is new. Only two years old with a parking lot in front, the architecture is contemporary and could, on first view, serve as setting for any of a variety of service establishments -- beauty salon, cleaning establishment, real estate office -- or day nursery. On one side is a used car lot, on the other a liquor store. Inside are Muzak and air-conditioning; the director's office is carpeted and offers a view of the play yard, in which a combination slide and play-house, custom-built to resemble the Old Woman's Shoe, is the most prominent feature.

Mrs. C. wanted to buy the property next door, but lost out to the liquor store. "We keep hoping they'll be closed (the liquor store is also the site of a book-making establishment) and we can have grass there".

Some of the children who attended California Play School followed the school over to its new location. These are the only Negro children in the school, whose enrollment has grown to one hundred. Mrs. C. is highly pleased with the new facilities. When she offered to place children from the former small school in California Play School while the new school was being constructed, parents refused to go into the area. The fear and hostility which had erupted the previous summer has taken much time to erase; in many places and in many ways, it continues to exist.

Program at the new school is apparently much the same in content and method as that at California Play School. The stress is on a structured and skill-oriented curriculum, for consumers who want an aura of professional expertise, but not too much:

> "We don't have a psychologist here; we don't try to psychoanalyze children. We don't take children with serious problems, but we do counsel parents when they want it. . . We'll start a reading program in the fall with three-year-olds. On this we will invite parents in to discuss, perhaps demonstrate. We'll have a reading expert, but ours is a non-pressure approach".

If You Can't Fight 'Em, Join 'Em:
Symbiotic Relationships Between Day Nursery Owners and the Licensing Agency

Like many of her colleagues, Mrs. C. is active in the Pre School Association of California, a mutual-benefit organization of private nursery school owners dedicated to protecting the interests of member facilities as well as upgrading the quality of services to clients, i.e., parents and children. The organization had its origins when a group of owners got together to share ideas in the 1950's. They had small schools in their own homes, and their licensing worker had suggested that they meet to discuss and find solutions to common problems 19/. Volume purchasing was seen as one possible benefit of such an organization (which the original informal group eventually became) but this, according to Mrs. C., "never worked" 20/. However, communication between schools, particularly the chance to observe other new facilities, has apparently been of great value.

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[19] This worker, now retired, is remembered with much appreciation by those schools she counseled because of her personal warmth, understanding, and commitment to the human as well as legal components of her job and her appreciation of the value of informal as well as formal channels of communication.

Her personal involvement was a matter of concern to the licensing supervisor who felt that her friendly relations with directors sometimes obscured needed objectivity. Her role definition, to which directors had grown accustomed, was not shared by the licensing worker who was her successor. This discrepancy led to much resentment directed toward the Licensing Department.

[20] In 1965 a group headed by the recently retired state Superintendent of Public Instruction attempted to form a membership organization of directors of preschool programs who would benefit by group purchasing and a certificate of membership which was to function as a "Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval". The attempt failed, as have several other similar efforts in Southern California.

One of the most effective functions of Pre School Association is the constant surveillance it maintains over the field of private nursery school operation. Officers of the group visit schools applying for membership to judge the prospective facility, with particular emphasis on physical standards:

> "We don't want to police schools; that's the Department of Social Welfare's job. We don't look at records, but try to get the feel of the school by looking at yards, equipment etc. We seek to maintain the image of private schools".

Besides its watchdog function the association sponsors workshops for teachers in member schools.

The four chapters of Pre School Association in Southern California contain about two hundred and fifty member schools whose owners have a variety of backgrounds, many in business. Among the officers and most active members of the association are a number of men, whose experience in administration has given them the interest and ability to be effective in such an organizational role. The benefits to Pre School Association members, particularly for schools which do not have strong professional or economic protection from environmental pressures, are many: administrative advice, staff in-service training, social contact, economic benefits (including group insurance policies) and a stamp of respectability and competence in areas which concern a large number of parents. In addition, the group lobbies, generally effectively, for legislation favorable to the private owner's interests. The association sends official representatives to Sacramento to make known to the legislature and the Department of Social Welfare what the group stands for on various issues related to group care programs. "What we want", observes Mrs. C., "is fair play and realistic legislation".

The relationship between the Department of Social Welfare and the Pre School Association is, to some extent, one of mutual benefit, as we have noted previously. According to Mrs. C., licensing plays an essential role in avoiding poor conditions in facilities and thus creates "a better image for early childhood education". The Pre School Association, for a number of reasons related both to community and institutional needs, is committed to the enforcement of "realistic legislation". Members thus feel constrained to report violations perpetrated by other (and potentially rival) facilities when they learn of them.

The Pre School Association also performs a service for the Department of Social Welfare through the socialization of potential owners. The Department occasionally utilizes private owners like Mrs. C. as informal consultants who can explain to licensing applicants such pragmatic realities as the economics of operation. In return, the department supplies consultants as speakers at association meetings -- and provides the legal enforcement of standards for which Pre School Association serves as unofficial guardian. The association thus approves of recommended standards for teachers if they do not threaten the economic survival of private schools. When the Department of Social Welfare seeks to adopt new, more stringent requirements, as it did recently, the Pre School Association, in the role of a latter-day Paul Revere, sent out the alarm to members that free enterprise in group care was in danger 21/. Mrs. C. has prophetically observed: "Requirements are all right, if they are slowly adopted; if it happens too fast, there are too many anxieties".

Fear of bureaucratic control and destruction of local autonomy by governmental agencies is aroused even more sharply by Federally-sponsored and -funded compensatory education programs. Although the concern for entrepreneurial interests is strong, it is accompanied by doubt as to the value of such programs for the people they were originally intended to benefit. Mrs. C. feels strongly that the quality of care and type of administrative structure made possible by private enterprise in day care operation is superior to that of Head Start. While acknowledging that the latter has been of benefit to private owners in making people more aware of the need for early childhood education, particularly in disadvantaged areas, she feels it is a 'pork-barrel' program which benefits everyone involved "but the children":

> "Head Start is hiring some private school teachers and can pay them two or three times what we can -- we're limited to fee levels. We're taxpayers; I resent this. They could pay teachers less, and give more to the child by improving facilities, many of which are not up to standard. We've done without for the sake of the children -- they could too. A Watts church turned out out-of the area teachers because they were not part of the community 22/.

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[21] The response of the owners was to inundate the department, via a barrage of letters, telegrams, and testimony at the public hearings, with counter-propaganda eloquently presenting their case.

[22] While the Office of Economic Opportunity encourages programs to recruit indigeneous people, it must be noted that the move toward local control is dictated less by government policy than by the desires of the black community itself.

> "The lack of consistency is psychologically harmful to the disadvantaged child. If he's taken out of the slum for a limited time, even in a good program with regularity, consistency, kindness, some toys, and then sent back where he was, because there are no more funds -- isn't this more frustrating than leaving him alone? If there is follow-through and consistency, then such a program is good".

Although disturbed by government subsidies of such programs while no economic relief is offered to struggling private owners, Mrs. C. is vehement in her desire to avoid similar financial aid to private schools: "There's too much red tape; they (the government) take over too much control. I want independence". Mrs. C. registers vigorous complaints concerning the amount of paperwork which governmental agencies -- Federal and State -- require of nursery school owners. Tired of "filling out forms, and having parents imposed on by surveys", Mrs. C. had been reluctant originally to give us an interview, until convinced that it was not our intent to "draw sweeping conclusions damning private schools". Because so much of her time is spent watching financial factors, and attempting to maintain "the highest standards possible within economic limitations", Mrs. C. -- aware of the marginal position of many operators of private day care facilities, who must make a living and thus must make a profit and yet reject what they consider to be sub-standard program and facilities -- is highly sensitive to any potential threat in the external environment.

As for the solution to the problem of providing inner-city ghetto areas with good child care programs, Mrs. C. is able to be somewhat more explicit about what will not work, than what will. Private schools, she feels, cannot succeed in slums; parents simply cannot afford the fees necessary for good care. Programs directly sponsored by the Federal government are equally unrealistic: "There are too many inequities; they don't work properly. They're too expensive; money is squandered. Head Start is a political program -- it's not adequately planned". The only remaining alternative, in her belief, is for the government to work through established non-profit agencies such as the Community Chest, which have the professional and administrative 'know how' and machinery and the concern for the needs of the child and his family, to successfully execute such a program.

Summary:
The Role of Proprietary Day Care

The dilemma which private school owners must solve is how to provide a community service and at the same time operate a successful business. Those who are skilled in the first task but cannot master the second unfortunately seldom survive. Similarly those who put the second goal above the first generally meet the same fate, due in good measure to the Licensing Department and the vigilance of such organizations as Pre School Association. Some owners lower the risk by locating in communities in which the rate of socio-economic change occurs slowly and imperceptibly, requiring comparatively little adaptation on the part of the institution. Mrs. C., however, found herself in an area of rapid change. When the forces became insurmountable, she sought out a less stressful environment in which she felt institutional and community needs would achieve a good "fit". Mrs. C. would be the first to admit that the program which she offers might not be suitable for some parents or families; her own comments reflect such an opinion: "Some differences in schools serve differences in children. Just as not all should go to college, not all should go to the same kind of school". She accepts in her program only children without special needs, and feels secure about asking parents to withdraw a child who is unable to adjust to the program.

In her choice of priorities for achieving quality in day care program, Mrs. C. is probably highly typical of private school owners. Faced with the constraints of operating a day care business without the assistance provided by either tax relief or public or charitable subsidy, they tend to define program quality in terms of its most visible aspects: attractiveness of plant and equipment. This is clearly a realistic adaptation. To operate, private centers must attract parents. Parents seeking full-day care are rarely sophisticated consumers; they want "good" care but have limited conception of what this entails. They tend to inquire about costs and to form a general impression from the appearance of the center; few ask about program or teacher qualifications. Private owners must, therefore, keep fees down and create an immediate favorable impression. Attractive, well planned facilities serve this latter purpose and also usually contribute, as we have found, to quality of program. The alternative of increasing teachers' professional qualifications is a less useful emphasis for center owners; it is a less visible asset, and it entails commitment to increased salaries, which are an expense with no depreciation allowances.

Furthermore, day nursery owners themselves are not typically identified with the type of credential and professional education career ladder which characterizes public education; they can perhaps work most effectively with staff members who are loyal, love children, and share the values of the owner and his clientele. It is noteworthy that in Mrs. C's school, as in most private centers, parents and teachers are in substantial agreement on child-rearing values.

Mrs. C. tends to be less sensitive than most owners of private nurseries are about their "profit-making" status; they have no difficulty in justifying it to themselves, but feel themselves criticized by social workers and professional educators identified with public agencies. In reality most nurseries are not highly profitable businesses;

the owner of a successful nursery makes an adequate living, somewhat more on the average than his bureaucratic counterpart, the head teacher in a public center of comparable size, but his responsibility is a good deal more inclusive and sweeping. Probably only the entrepreneurs who establish chains of successful nurseries, like Fair Oaks -- and these are few -- make a more than adequate income. There are far more owners with marginal nurseries which barely provide them with a living.

In recognition of this fact, Mrs. C. has devoted a great deal of time and energy outside of her own school to encouraging the development of a less stressful environment in which private school owners can upgrade standards and facilities at a pace which they, as individual operators, can competently master. Owners like Mrs. C. value their independence and their autonomy in moving to meet the needs of their immediate community. Most of the large population of families they serve have ready access to no other type of care.

While some proprietary nurseries, usually those with professionally trained directors like Blueberry Hill and to some extent Pooh Corner, deliberately seek to serve a heterogeneous population of families and children, more commonly the primary competence of private directors lies in the provision of care for a group of families with common values and comparable needs. Schools like Fair Oaks and California Play School allow little room for individual differences of children, for non-conforming behavior within the group. This approach doubtless has its limitations. On the other hand it has the advantage of letting children know clearly where they are. In a disoriented society, the value of such experiences should not, perhaps, be underestimated.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NON-PROFIT NURSERY IN THE INNER CITY

The Case of Sunshine Nursery

We observed at a number of day nurseries with a totally Negro staff and enrollment. The majority, regardless of sponsorship, presented a bleak and sterile environment, particularly in outdoor play areas. The reasons often lay in the socio-economic conditions prevalent in urban disadvantaged areas, among them lack of economic resources and vulnerability to vandalism. In addition, lack of organizational stability often meant such a rapid turn-over in staff that the development of creative settings was an impossibility. However, one program was a remarkable exception. It seemed particularly important to examine the evolution of Sunshine Nursery in view of the solutions it may hold for child care facilities in disadvantaged communities.

In low-income neighborhoods in the inner city there are very few proprietary nurseries. Public and charitable facilities meet most of the need for group day care, but in many areas these facilities, typically established many years earlier, fall short of supplying the full current demand, if they are present at all. New charitable centers are difficult to establish and support; some new public centers are being built, but the administrative process tends to be slow. The type of facility most responsive to local need in such neighborhoods is the non-profit nursery, usually church-sponsored, which receives no direct cash subsidy (in contrast to the charitable nursery) but which, because of its tax-exempt status and the provision of space free or at a nominal rental by the sponsoring agency, can charge lower fees than private nurseries.

Sunshine Nursery was begun in 1956, in the same decade as the majority of the private nurseries in our sample. It is located in an area which was, in 1950, predominantly white. By 1960 the Negro population had reached nearly 50%, filling the void left by a large number of Jewish and Oriental families who moved to other, generally more affluent, sections of the city. The church with which Sunshine Nursery is affiliated and whose quarters it occupies did, in fact, purchase the property from a Jewish congregation.

Mrs. G., the present director, a warm, attractive and articulate Negro woman in her forties, knew about the existence of the school because she lived in the area: "I saw it all -- I watched the equipment come in". Because the nursery school was not licensed, it was soon closed. Notes Mrs. G.:

> "I was interested in going into the field of child care 1/, so a very dear friend of mine, who had been employed in a nursery school, and I talked to the Reverend. He was very receptive to the idea -- he helped us to become licensed and to set up the nursery school Board which assesses our administration, in the church. I myself don't belong to the church, but the Board, all of whom are members of the community, do. I was the first licensed director; I've been alone since my friend retired".

When Mrs. G. began operating the school almost all of "her children" -- as she likes to call them -- were Jewish. Today the area appears to be a stable black middle class residential area 2/, and the average educational attainment (four years of high school) is relatively high for a so-called ghetto area. However, in 1960 seventy percent of its wage earners made less than $8,000 a year, 12% of the married couples were separated or divorced, and 50% of the adult females were in the labor force. By 1970, the latter figures will no doubt have risen considerably higher.

Sunshine Nursery was originally a neighborhood school. Families sent children because "it was a matter of convenience -- most could walk to school". Now part of the clientele comes from other sections of Los Angeles, some as many as twenty miles away, because the school has a reputation for excellence, and because its proximity to the freeway makes it convenient for mothers who work in the downtown area. Many of these families formerly lived in the area and although they have moved away, they continue to send their children to Sunshine Nursery. The waiting list is long and the need for advertisement non-existent: "Friends tell friends, and families tell one another. The public school which is near by recommends us for extended day care".

Enrollment at Sunshine Nursery has grown over the years from 24 to 69 (including school-age children in the extended day program) although average daily attendance in 1966 was 45 children. Enrollment for extended day care, a rapidly increasing community need not only in

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[1] Mrs. G. had attended a junior college in Los Angeles and received an Associate of Arts degree in nursery education.

[2] Mrs. G. notes: "The neighborhood has changed racially but not economically. I was one of the first Negroes to buy a home here. All the homes are maintained as well or better than before".

this area but throughout the country, has doubled in recent years. Because of this growing need, the school had to request use of another room from the church in whose building the school operates, and rent an additional back yard playground in the neighborhood. "The older boys need a place to horse around" says Mrs. G. "I know this is not a good nursery school term, but it's true".

The staff at Sunshine Nursery consisted, at the time of our observations, of five full-time teachers. Mrs. G's father provides, with little recompense, his services as maintenance man and grandfather-figure, in the latter role a source of great delight to the many fatherless boys in the school. Mrs. G. sees her own role of director as requiring constant daily contact with the children. She teaches them music and supervises a group of boys at lunch time, besides informal activities. Her requirements for teachers are high, even unrealistic in view of the available supply:

> "A person who works with young children must have. . . it's hard to describe but I can almost feel it. . . a certain quality, soft but firm. An experience with children is important. Formal education does not necessarily provide the equivalent. One of my best teachers has only a high school education but she's wonderful with children. A good teacher must be able to work together with other staff, too. We work as a unit".

Mrs. G. is quick to point out that in-service training is essential for teachers of young children:

> "It's very important for teachers to go to workshops, attend meetings, visit other schools. This may seem contradictory to my feelings about formal education, but this is training of a special kind. It's necessary to keep up with things, with children's needs".

Mrs. G. commented ruefully on our return visit that her high expectations ("I'm not satisfied with my present staff -- I guess I'm hard to please"), combined with a dearth of black nursery school teachers -- let alone teachers of any color -- have depleted her staff. She has recently lost some valuable teachers to marriage and four housekeepers to exactly what, she does not know: "It isn't the pay. Those available just aren't adequate". She has tried the State Department of Employmemt and a local teacher training institution with little success. She prefers somebody who lives in the area: "They must be here early in the morning, and available when needed", and those who are married. Aides are only a partial solution; "I have a teen-age aide, but I have to pay her as much as other teachers (based on an hourly wage) to keep her".

The competition which Federally-funded compensatory education programs such as Head Start give private nursery schools is felt equally by Sunshine Nursery. Mrs. G. notes that she can't afford to pay her teachers "$575 a month like they do, although I do pay my head teacher that". Many of the teachers who are willing to work for the wages a black church-sponsored school (which puts two strikes against it to begin with) can pay do not appeal to Mrs. G. because of their middle class, school-establishment orientations: "They're too dressed up; they're 'class room' teachers".

In spite of staffing problems Mrs. G. feels that the teachers she does have function well as a group and that their prime interest is the children ("It couldn't be the money"). The group is a congenial one which used to go out to dinner regularly until they discontinued the practice because of one person on the staff who didn't, in Mrs. G's words, "blend".

Mrs. G's own role concept indicates a perception of the importance of human relations, for both children and adults. Her sensitivity to the needs of everyone with whom she works -- children ("I want to help them develop some of their creative abilities"), staff ("keeping the teachers happy is important -- they work better with children that way"), and parents ("parents get tired, too, and don't like to be told their child has misbehaved at school. Our relationships are very close -- this is what we build the school on") is consistently apparent. To her teachers, Mrs. G. gives much warmth, support and encouragement, both personally and professionally. She provides teachers with as many opportunities as possible for setting up their own program ("The staff get their own library books, and plan activities"). Contact with staff is frequent and informal:

> "I work intimately with my teachers; we often discuss things. I assist them, take over classes for them, and give them new ideas from magazines.
>
> "They participate in all areas of decision-making. I take care of enrollment and finances but they take part in everything else. Teachers are included in all policy discussions. They are very much involved in decisions and I take their advice into consideration always. We all feel free to talk to one another" 3/.

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[3] When a teacher's performance is not satisfactory, Mrs. G. talks to her personally -- in a friendly, 'joking' way. She appreciates the need to protect adults' self-esteem as well as children's.

Parents are actively encouraged to participate in the affairs of the school ("They are always asking what they can do. They bring books and records, refreshments for the children's parties"). Relationship with the parents is on a one-to-one, personal basis intended to give parents information and support they need, as well as to protect teachers from being "cornered and asked about how Johnny did today. This takes teachers time away from the children". Mrs. G. listens to parents' problems but does not counsel: "I'm not qualified to do this". Of Sunshine Nursery, it is more meaningful to speak of "the group", which includes staff, children and parents, than of "the facility".

The director tries to give the children the things they don't have at home; stories, music, food, and good care:

> "The care we try to give is complete, not just custodial. We expose the children to as many experiences as possible. We stress good citizenship, but the only time we're firm is in the dining room. They don't always have the opportunity to learn manners at home. Outside of that we're very flexible".

Program and setting at Sunshine Nursery were strikingly similar in many ways to those at Pooh Corner. Highest in frequency were lessons related to social behavior -- not rules of social living as at Pooh Corner, but consideration for the rights of others. Stressed almost equally were activities which resulted in awe and wonder, creativity and self-sufficiency. Restriction and guidance were minimal; the percentage of teacher behavior devoted to encouraging self-initiated activities of the children was the highest in our sample. The entire program clearly mirrored the director's and teachers' expectations for the children. The children were happily and continually involved in activities which provided a wide variety of learning experiences.

The primary factor, beyond staff skills, responsible for such a program was the physical setting. The rich environment which had been provided for the children, particularly in the one comparatively small outdoor yard available for use by the preschool group, bore the stamp of inventive genius. The area was an oblong courtyard in front of the church Sunday School rooms, surrounded by the high walls of buildings on three sides and a brick wall with an iron gate on the fourth. Through this gate the children had a clear view of the city street beyond. Along the sides of the yard, which was covered partly by cement and partly by grass tended with loving care by the director and her father, was arranged in Turkish Bazaar fashion what the director called her "little city". A make-shift, make-believe theater, store, school, house, and similar buildings all scaled to the size of the children and created out of old crates, boards and love by the director's father lined one wall. Along another were a fish pond stocked with live goldfish, a turtle, and small animals in cages (a monkey had been a recent resident).

At one end was an enormous sand area, covered with a canvas awning, and at the other, the large-muscle equipment -- swings, climbing bar and boards, etc. These activity areas, which encouraged the spontaneous development of sub-groups of children, were interspersed with trees, some ordinary varieties, some exotic. Pathways were clearly demarcated by cement walks. On the basis of our rating scale for physical space, we judged the setting to be the most creative and well-planned -- given the severe financial and spatial limitations -- in our entire sample. It was an environment which could be created in an urban ghetto area at comparatively little cost. It was, we felt, a setting in which children could learn to love 'school'.

Epilogue

When we returned to Sunshine Nursery for the present study, we found once more how transitory group care settings, particularly those which are innovative, can be. Gone were the buildings of the "little city", the sand-play area, and with them the entire ethos of the environment. Mrs. G. sadly related the series of minor and major crises which had led to the present discouraging situation. The shortage of teachers precipitated one of her most acute problems centering on her relationship with the Department of Social Welfare in the person of the licensing worker, while rigid enforcement of fire and safety laws executed the *coup de grace* to the once-rich physical setting.

Prior to assignment of the present consultant to Sunshine Nursery, Mrs. G. had had a licensing worker of the "old school" whose interpretation of rules and regulations was flexible, perhaps even loose, and highly people-oriented. It was her belief that rules were invented to serve the people and not vice versa. The relationship was warm and on a close personal basis. Upon the retirement of this consultant, a new licensing worker was assigned to Sunshine Nursery. Friction occurred and tension mounted as her interpretation of child care standards came into conflict with that of Mrs. G. The worker demanded rigid enforcement of policy with respect to grouping of children. (The worker, according to Mrs. G., wanted children to be formed into tight little groups according to age level: But I feel that the child needs to know he belongs to someone. At lunch I let brothers and sisters sit together; they need each other") and teacher-child ratios (of the Department's standard of a ratio of one teacher for every ten children, Mrs. G. commented: "I don't have this ratio now because I can't find a qualified teacher and the licensing worker doesn't count me as a teacher (because) she doesn't want me to work with the children. She thinks I should sit in the office") 4/. The fateful die was cast when the licensing worker,

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[4] The ratio of teaching staff to children cannot fall below Department requirements; however, the question of who is to be considered as accptable staff is open to interpretation. A director may be staff unless her "responsibilities include heavy administrative duties. . . ".

arriving unannounced 5/ one morning discovered Mrs. G's father assisting with the children in the temporary absence of the teacher. The worker did not consider him to be an acceptable teacher 6/. Distraught, Mrs. G. requested advice from our office since we had recently returned to interview her for our present study. We could offer nothing but referral to regulations and the assurance that she would receive fair treatment from a supervisor who was well aware of all of the ramifications. Mrs. G. requested a Department of Social Welfare hearing with the consultant and her supervisor. Our predictions were shortly proven true and a solution agreed upon.

A less easily remedied problem was that imposed by the stringent regulations of municipal agencies responsible for policing day care facilities for potential physical hazards. Upon orders of the City Department of Building and Safety, the "little city" was torn down:

> "They said it was a fire hazard. . . a school in Chicago had a fire, I guess. I begged them to let me keep the buildings. . . I asked if I couldn't make some changes to save them. They said no and all my buildings were demolished. . . The play house, the store, everything; We had to take the awning off the sand box too. . . I haven't been able to afford a metal or plastic one to replace it.
>
> "Everything in the yard has been carefully planned. We dug up the black top front -- the older boys helped -- and put in grass. We worked hard to keep that grass. I sometimes wonder if that will be the next thing the city says must go".

Mrs. G. feels such agencies are unrealistic in their expectations, both with respect to the financial ability of operators to meet demands for upgrading facilities and with respect to what determines good child care. The "little city" represented a creative, economically feasible means of providing meaningful life experiences for children. Mrs. G. points out that the prohibitive cost of more expensive, possibly more "safe" equipment is only one of the reasons she had not bought commercially-produced play apparatus. Echoing the feelings of Mr. Z at Happy Hours, she observed: "I think the things you build yourself

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[5] This is standard and, in most cases, wise Department policy, but the previous consultant had always told directors in advance of her visit, a courtesy which contributed to the non-stressful nature of the relationship, and built up a set of expectations difficult to reverse.

[6] "Staff members must be of suitable age and temperament for work with children". Manual of Policies and Procedures - Day Nurseries, State Department of Social Welfare.

are more creative. Besides, teachers are more important than a lot of fancy equipment". The problem of vandalism also discourages Mrs. G. from investing large amounts of money in play equipment, even if she had it to spend: "Children climb over the fence and throw the fish out of the pond so they die".

Like California Play School and Pooh Corner, Sunshine Nursery may be doomed, if not to extinction, to mediocrity. Mrs. G. finds the mounting pressures increasingly difficult to meet. Of all the constraints, rising costs and inadequate budget are the greatest:

> "I hate to raise fees, but I had to do it. We had a meeting and I apologized to my parents, and they understood, but our financial problems are never really solved" [7].

The players in the very serious game of child care are constantly faced with decisions of strategy, some long-run and some day-to-day, which will arouse a number of counter-moves, any one of which could spell defeat for the program. Those directors who seek a very special quality, often unrelated to commonly-held physical standards, which concentrates on enriching experiences for children run this constant risk of a -mate by any of several potential adversaries: high operating costs, lack of teacher supply, or controls posed by regulatory agencies. Mrs. G. is quick to agree to the need for such controls, but questions the inflexibility of those which she feels militate against good care given the resources of the setting.

The problems faced by Mrs. G. are similar to those of Mrs. O at Pooh Corner, lying not only in personality conflict but in value orientations. Policy of municipal agencies responsible for enforcement of codes relating to the health, safety and general welfare of the public relies on some highly specific and compartmentalized concerns for physical protection. The specifications of the Department of Health relate only to such matters as keeping food germ-free; of the Department of Safety, to venting of kitchen equipment; of the Fire Department, to the removal of combustible materials. There is little coordination of effort, in Mrs. G's belief, between city departments or between local and state agencies. Added to such bifurcation is the concentration on instrumentalities, the tangible, concrete, and enforceable aspects of physical facilities rather than on identification of educational goals. The latter are much more elusive and much more difficult to justify to parents and taxpayers than the need for rubber mats under the jungle gym. Mrs. G. feels that she is more qualified to judge the adequacy of provisions for the children's safety than inspectors from outside the facility: "I give the youngest children to my most skilled teachers. There is no place anyone could get hurt on the playground".

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[7] Some months, when the school does not take in enough to meet costs, Mrs. G., unknown to anyone else, does not take a salary.

While waiting for better days in the form of a licensing consultant with whom she can work effectively, Mrs. G. provides a program distinguished by its recognition of human needs. Over the years, the needs of the community Sunshine Nursery serves have grown and changed. Have the perceptions of the director done likewise?

> "Oh yes, I should say. I'm much more flexible and relaxed. My experience with my own children, including a teen-ager, and those in the school have made me see things so differently than when I began. I used to be so orderly and opinionated about it. Now when things get dirty I don't get so upset. Seeing the children's needs and working with them has helped me to grow up".

Summary: The Role of the Church-Sponsored Day Nursery

Churches which sponsor day care programs do so for several reasons. Sunday school facilities are usually adaptable for week-day nursery programs. Fuller use of these facilities increases the service of the church to the community; some churches may also view favorably the possibility of attracting new members in this way, and/or the additional income which a nursery may bring, if space rental or church administrative costs are assessed to its budget 8/.

Most churches expect to break even on their weekday nurseries, although a few wealthier churches, stimulated by effective ministerial, lay or nursery-professional leadership, provide special services or sliding fee scales which require that nursery costs be subsidized out of general church budget or special contributions. More frequently, a church in some financial need hopes to subsidize its own general budget through the presence of the nursery. The ghetto church which sponsors Sunshine Nursery falls in the latter category. In effect the church

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[8] In some neighborhoods, especially in residential suburbs, they may be the only facilities available; a church can establish a nursery without changing its zoning status.

rents its space to Mrs. G. as it might to a private nursery director 9/; simultaneously, it gives her autonomy in decision-making. In contrast, the nursery school run by Mrs. G's own church cannot, in her opinion, achieve good quality of care because they "keep the lid" on the director: "As a result it's not a good school. The director is the pastor's wife. This is too close a relationship between church and school; things can get sticky". While Mrs. G. reports to the nursery school board established by the church, the board's confidence in her integrity and experience makes it possible for them to give her an essentially free hand in determining policy. The fact that Mrs. G. has been a long-time resident of the area has given her a first-hand knowledge of local needs, which is undoubtedly a prime factor in motivating such confidence.

The story of Sunshine Nursery does not highlight to any marked degree the distinctive features of church schools. In many respects, church nurseries face problems similar to those of charitable day nurseries. Directors frequently are saddled with a board which interferes or is more concerned with church affairs than with good experiences for young children. Often teachers must be selected from a limited pool of applicants either because of requirement of church membership of because of low salary levels. Once hired, it is often difficult in a charitable setting to fire anyone who does not wish to quit. In addition physical space is shared with Sunday programs -- which can severely limit development of good play areas.

On the other hand, a church can offer a natural community to children whose parents share a similar world view. Its ideals, when working, can give the child a setting in which love is visibly demonstrated.

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[9] There is evidence that Mrs. G. really perceives herself in this role. Eventually she hopes to "move her school" to another predominantly black area of the central city where her husband has purchased a house. "I've had my eye on the property for some time (I've lived in this area for years) but never could afford it". These plans are for the future, however; an elderly woman presently lives in the house and Mrs. G. would never evict her. "I feel", she commented in a statement which accurately sums up both her teaching and life style, "I must consider other people first".

CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Excellence, as well as its absence, is found in day care centers under all types of sponsorship. The variety in types of program competence, serving the needs of different kinds of children and families, impresses us as one of the strongest assets of day care as we have observed it in southern California. Contemporary metropolises are notable for their diversity; where it is possible for facilities for the education, care, and guidance of young children to respect and respond to this diversity, the whole community is enriched. In the early years the child's experience and personal resources probably are too limited to enable him to benefit from care which communicates sharp discrepancies between home and day care center 1/. Therefore, where parents can choose from among a wide variety of group care facilities, these needs of the child for continuity seem more likely to be met.

The availability of diversity in day care appears to depend on the absence of environmental factors which limit the range of possibilities and the presence of leadership who can give form to those possibilities which exist and protection to what has been established. Through the case histories which have been presented a series of environmental stresses were described and the coping strategies of those responsible were documented. Here we shall review briefly types of stresses and types of effective responses for the purpose of giving consideration to programs which might be valuable, but are difficult to establish or maintain at this time in the community.

Environmental Stresses

The environmental stresses which inevitably determine the numbers and kinds of day care programs in a community include those imposed by the physical site, the characteristics of the neighborhood population, and the actions of regulatory bodies. The ability to command staff resources and the presence or absence of administrative constraints also serve as potential sources of stress. A community undoubtedly could do much to assess their potential for the development of day care programs by looking, at any given time, for the presence or absence of these sources of environmental stress.

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[1] To our knowledge little is known about the ways in which young children handle sharp discontinuities and what kinds of discontinuities present the most serious problems.

Physical site

Land values and zoning restrictions are crucial in determining the availability of sites for day nurseries. The greater the amount of capital required to purchase land, the fewer the types of day nurseries which can be established up to a rapidly reached vanishing point. If zoning ordinances limit nurseries to commercial neighborhoods, the variety and accessibility of nurseries is greatly limited unless variances are readily granted. The diversity found in physical sites of nurseries in metropolitan Los Angeles strongly reflects the long tradition of care which preceded tightening of regulations and rapid changes in land use patterns and values: the majority of existing nurseries probably could not be established today in their present locations. Proprietary nurseries are particularly vulnerable to cost of land. Where this is prohibitive, such nurseries probably cannot be established.

Day nurseries are more often started in already existing buildings, than in newly built facilities, especially designed as day care centers. The age of the facility, their suitability for group care of young children, and the cost of maintenance and improvements all serve as constraints on the development of good day care. Older buildings are more likely to be spacious and relatively inexpensive, but usually pose maintenance problems. If they are two-story, fire department regulations in southern California limit use for children to the first floor only -- wasteful of space unless the owner lives on the premises or unless the nursery is large enough to warrant extensive administrative offices.

In the neighborhoods where proprietary centers cannot be developed because of high land values or restrictive zoning, day nurseries under non-profit or public sponsorship often can be established in already existing facilities such as churches, schools, and community centers. However, shared use of facilities can place severe limits on the effective development of available space.

Population Characteristics

The number of young children and of working mothers, the socio-economic level of the neighborhood, and its ethnic composition all determine what the clientele of a day care center will be, and whether it will, over the short or long range, have sufficient clientele. Most successful day care administrators have been skilled or lucky in sizing up the client potential of the neighborhood in which the nursery is established. However, even the most skilled rarely anticipate population changes over time. In our case studies we have described the effects of neighborhood change on nearly all our sample nurseries. Their adaptive responses have varied. Some nurseries with particular types of excellence are able to attract clients from a wide area, as a result of established loyalty by families who have moved, or of specialized services offered.

Some are able to adapt program to a new clientele, though this is a complex and risky process, as we have shown. Some, whose competence is clearly defined in a particular sphere, simply move with their clients.

Regulatory bodies

Licensing departments and other regulatory agencies (i.e., Departments of Health, Fire, Building and Safety) often exert powerful constraints, as we have documented. Such regulations are essential in assuring basic standards for group care for children; however, when they are not applied competently and with some degree of flexibility, program may suffer. The constraints on employment and stability of personnel faced by these regulatory agencies themselves often militate against achievement of such competence, and the interaction between nursery director and licensing worker can turn into a battle between conflicting interpretations of standards for good care. Those nursery administrators who cope successfully with regulatory bodies generally have a high degree of professional-political competence and confidence.

Ability to command staff resources

Without good teachers and supportive personnel, the best conceived day care program doesn't happen. The ability to find and keep good teachers depends on some combination of teacher availability (the available "good teacher" may range from professionally trained, to untrained but teachable and loving children, depending on the structure of the center), adequacy of wages which can be paid, and the director's personal skill in attracting teachers and retaining their loyalty.

Administrative constraints

Day care centers which are not separate and independent entities have certain advantages with respect to their ability to cope with the stresses noted above. A public center operated by a large school district is ordinarily assured of a basic operating budget, some sort of physical space, and a supply of teachers, as well as relative independence of licensing and other regulation. Accomplishment of its program goals, however, will depend on the extent to which the bureaucratic system is supportive and responsive to the day care segment of its many programs. Where day care is clearly marginal and day care administrators are unable to compensate for this status by skilled personal leadership, bureaucratic constraints may act to keep program consistently mediocre.

In non-profit centers with lay boards of directors, a similar process may occur. The board assumes responsibility for stability in program, but also retains the privilege of control over policy. Unless the board and the director share common goals, program development may reach a stalemate. A similar end result can occur when a board of limited vision deliberately avoids selection of a director and other staff who want to alter the program.

Leadership and the Capacity to Cope

The capacity of day care centers to cope with these environmental stresses depends on a number of factors. One may best be described as luck, with respect to the stresses themselves: some nursery owners have had the good fortune to inherit their mother's nursery, to be assigned a congenial licensing worker and cooperative inspector, to locate in a neighborhood with unusually stable population, and to have a good and stable teaching and housekeeping staff.

To cope with existing or potential stresses, clearly defined characteristics are required of day care center directors, on whom the principal burden of coping falls. As we review our case studies, five factors, in varying combination, appear to contribute to a director's ability to cope with stress and achieve good program: (1) professional skill in setting and implementing goals, (2) business competence, (3) political know-how, (4) creative ingenuity, and (5) a quality of motivation that has been referred to above as commitment, devotion, "caring".

Professional skill

A high level of professional training provides a day care director with a basis for clarity in setting educational objectives and knowledge of techniques and resources for achieving them. Not all of the directors in our case studies possessed this characteristic, but those who did seemed particularly well equipped to deal with a diversity of pressures and challenges.

Business competence

Especially for the directors of independent proprietary nurseries, and in some degree for all administrators, a realistic sense of economic realities and options for dealing with them is a significant asset in providing a foundation for good program.

Political know-how

If politics is "the art of the possible", some day care directors are demonstrably excellent politicians. Skill in establishing good personal and working relationships with others who can provide support -- school superintendents, licensing workers, professional colleagues, clients, the business community, legislators -- and in making effective use of the powers thus gained, has been the crucial factor underlying many excellent programs.

Creative ingenuity

One approach to coping with limited resources is to "make do" and to make, with imagination and skill with the hands, a physical environment which supports program goals.

Commitment

Concern for young children, reflected in sometimes enormous commitment of time and energy, is a factor which in sufficient intensity partly compensates for lack of one or more of the others.

While categorizing of individual modes of operation runs the danger of oversimplification, the identification of possible patterns may be helpful. Thus we have described the combination of business and professional competence (Mr. E. at Fair Oaks), of professional competence and political know-how (Mrs. B. at Blueberry Hill), of business skill and political know-how (Mrs. C. at California Play School), of professional competence and devotion (Mrs. S. at Hill St.), of creative ingenuity and devotion (Mr. and Mrs. Z. at Happy Hours, and Mrs. G. at Sunshine Nursery).

Good Care for Children

Environmental constraints and limitations in the ability to cope with them operate in a variety of ways to provide settings in which care is not good for children. From our viewpoint one of the most clearly hazardous factors, which results from a combination of the constraints noted above and serves to limit coping capacities, is large size. This kind of bigness creates problems for little children, who are notably unadept at coping with impersonal environments (although those who can count on strong personal recognition and support at home probably do better than children who lack this basis for self-esteem). In our earlier study we found an inverse relationship between large size in day care centers and the quality of care offered young children 2/. Large centers which have achieved competence in realizing their objectives for young children invariably are characterized by clearly formulated goals which, ordinarily, are consistent with authoritarian teacher-child relationships. In our experience, other types of programs do not seem to survive in large centers.

Day care centers, like other social organizations in contemporary urban society, are showing a clear tendency to increase in size 3/. Increases in size often are defended on the basis of community need but primarily justification is based on cost factors. By increasing the number of children served, cost per child can be reduced. This, in turn, strengthens the position of the center with respect to the stresses outlined.

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[2] Prescott and Jones (1967), Chapter VII, Organizational Characteristics, p. 226, 240.

[3] From "Day Care: An Institutional Analysis", Progress Report, submitted June, 1969.
"In 1951, 78% of proprietary centers served 30 or fewer children, and only 2% enrolled more than 60 children. Today 38% enroll 30 or fewer, while 15% enroll over 60 children".

Many constraints operate to encourage this pattern. Some are controllable, like increasing land costs. Others have their source in the various regulatory agencies and may be subject to modification. For example, zoning regulations in most principalities prohibit the establishment of day nurseries except in commercial areas. Consequently, many recently established nurseries occupy store buildings -- with large plate-glass windows, miniscule yards, and high rents, with liquor stores and used-car lots for neighbors. Securing a variance in a residential zone was once possible but now is increasingly difficult (although some determined directors have succeeded).

Fire and health regulations, designed to provide adequate protection, surely provide more than adequate limitations in some instances, when rules designed for a wide variety of enterprises are applied unthinkingly to centers which must bear the cost of compliance.

Certain policies of regulatory agencies make it difficult for some sizes of centers to operate economically or even to exist. Thus regulatory classifications as well as basic economics are important determinants of size. In California, foster day care homes are licensed for no more than six children, including the family's own (there is a special category of foster family care for 7 - 10 children, but requirements are such that few can qualify). Any facility offering group care for more than 10 children must be licensed as a day nursery and meet the much more complex requirements of local zoning ordinances, fire and health departments, as well as the standards of the Department of Social Welfare. These procedures, together with requirements for teacher-child ratios, militate against the establishment of nurseries with fewer than two dozen children. Because no day nursery may have fewer than two adults on the premises, the costs of employing a second teacher are almost invariably met by keeping the ratio of children to adults at the maximum allowed. Sometimes, the requirements of the licensing department itself as interpreted by consultants can militate against development of some kinds of variety in day care programs which might well be beneficial. Even the requirements for teacher-child ratios and teacher qualifications, which basically serve to strengthen programs, do an occasional disservice when compensatory factors in a particular setting cannot be taken into account.

Except for a few small centers which succeed, through a combination of devotion, intuition and luck, in offering a good quality of home-substitute care, most private nurseries with fewer than about 45 children balance on a tightrope between imminent financial disaster and inadequate staff, facilities and program. In public day care some district supervisors, girded with a firm idea of optimum size in programs for young children, have succeeded in retaining centers with fewer than 40 children, but the system pressures are continually pushing center size upward.

Some recently proposed strategies for meeting national needs for day care and compensatory education may help to support and maintain variety in day care programs. Provision of vouchers to low-income families who could then choose among day care facilities, public and private, is one such plan. Subsidy of potential day nursery owners in low-income neighborhoods is another; we visualize, for example, that husband-wife teams might be assisted in starting small day care facilities, and provided with opportunities to share equipment and to obtain consultation.

If ways could be found to draw foster family day care into the community network of group day care, and to create some centers serving from 7 to 25 children in a neighborhood, much valuable diversity could be encouraged. Changes such as those suggested probably could not be implemented without some built-in protection from the stresses which have been discussed. This protection probably would take the form of legislation which would increase the financial resources available to certain types of day care or which would offer relief from taxes or zoning pressures, etc.

Changes such as those suggested activate the regulatory, professional and business organizations through which day care promotes its concerns and vested interests and solicits social consensus. The role which such organizations play is important to an understanding of day care as an emerging social institution. In Part II of this report, Group Day Care: The Leadership Network, we shall look more specifically at these organizations and attempt to examine the dynamics of day care as a total system.

PART II

GROUP DAY CARE AND LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES

Part II considers the problems raised in Part I from a sociological perspective and in greater technical detail, attempting to examine the dynamics of the total system, especially in terms of its leadership network.

The chapter outline for Part II is as follows:

1. The Problem of Regulating Quality in Group Day Care
2. The State Department of Social Welfare -- The Licensing Process
3. The State Department of Social Welfare -- The Regulatory Function
4. The State Department of Education
5. The Leadership Network: How it works
6. The Leadership Network: Personal Characteristics
7. Recent Developments -- Head Start and 4 C
8. Summary and Conclusions

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